

# Seven Treatises

A COMPREHENSIVE HANDBOOK  
ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE



*Containing such direction as is gathered out of the Holy Scriptures,  
leading and guiding to true happiness, both in this life, and in the life  
to come: and may be called the Practice of Christianity.*

**RICHARD ROGERS**

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Containing such direction as is gathered out of the Holy Scriptures, leading and guiding to true happiness, both in this life, and in the life to come: and may be called the Practice of Christianity.

Profitable for all such as heartily desire the same: in the which, more particularly true Christians may learn how to lead a godly and comfortable life every day.

By RICHARD ROGERS,

Preacher of the word of God at Wethersfield in Essex.

Deut. 33:12.

The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety with him, who protecteth him all the day long.

Psal. 84:10.

One day in thy Courts is better than a thousand other where.

At London Imprinted by Felix Kyngston, for Thomas Man, and Robert Dexter, and are to be sold at the brazen Serpent in Paul's Churchyard. 1603.

This text has been initially updated from EEBO-TCP by Project Puritas (Logan West, David Jonescue, Alex Sarrouf)  
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Editor's Note - During the TCP Transcription Process, all the text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimile script. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may remain if uncaught. My apologies in advance where such errors occur. Also, the symbol <H&G> signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Because a majority of

readers are not fluent in the original languages; it was thought best to omit, instead of possibly misconstrue; since most original languages are written in antiquated script in the original facsimiles. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

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A Sweet Meditation of the Authors

**TO THE KING.**

To the right virtuous, high, and mighty Prince, King James, our dread Sovereign, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. long life, happy days, and most prosperous reign.

Most gracious and dread Sovereign Lord, I have not presumed upon this dedication, as being overtaken with the forgetfulness either of your Majesty's greatness, or mine own poverty: For I confess, that if comparison were made that way, I might worthily be blamed of presumption. But the truth is, that I laid in balance your mind rather than your Majesty, and the argument rather than my penning of it. In this I confess I presumed and I trust without desert of blame, that as you have preferred godliness before glory in the midst of this glory which God hath brought you unto: so you will prefer a treatise of godliness, thus simply furnished, before a glorious style. Which is not seldom repugnant to the simplicity of holy things. And yet my meaning is to confess to your Majesty, that this argument deserved both a more learned and more gracious pen than mine. To which I would with all my heart have given place, if I had either seen before me, or heard behind me the footsteps of any tending that way that I go, though I confess, there are some to be seen travailing in ways near adjoining to this.

Concerning your Majesty, I am persuaded, that you repose your greatest greatness in the communion of Saints, and not in your severed calling which is transitory: and therefore will account yourself honored by the augmentation of grace, and the furtherance of true holiness. Your Majesty's own affairs must be permitted to enjoy their opportunities, and your godly wisdom to enjoy your choice in this variety of reading. But I doubt not, but your godly heart will persuade you to receive a book of this kind with a gracious hand, though it were to no other end, but to begin to God's people in the

entertaining of any true hearted motive unto holiness. And this to say the truth, is that wherein I have made bold to use your gracious and renowned name, to advantage my intent of furthering the people committed to your charge in their passage to salvation. Let it therefore (I most humbly supplicate) please your Majesty to give allowance to my endeavor and drift, and to pardon my slips: for my meaning hath been to seek the honor of God in this work, and to borrow help in this Dedication, of the grace he hath given you for such purposes.

Thus rejoicing, with the rest of God's people, for the comfort wherewith the Churches heart is comforted by you, and desiring the lineal descent of these kingdoms to your Majesty's royal posterity, till Jesus Christ with his glorious coming obscure all the glory of the world, I beseech the holy Ghost to be with your spirit, and keep your Majesty in Christ unto the end.

Your Majesty's most humble subject RICHARD ROGERS, Minister of the Gospel.

## **TO THE CHRISTIAN READER - I.**

The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. The truth hereof may appear in the Papists; who discerning that their books of Controversies, stuffed with manifold untruths, fallacians, and corruptions, were not able to gain sufficiently (though small gain be too great for such merchants) to their Babylonish kingdom, have set themselves and others on work (being all set on work of Hell) to pen certain treatises, tending to ensnare and entangle the minds of ignorant and simple Christians, in the corrupt and filthy puddle of Popish devotion. In this respect I persuade myself, it is come to pass (not without the gracious

providence of God) that the author hereof hath been encouraged in himself, and by others, to write these Christian directions, as a counterpoison to all such enchantments of Papists, who would by these means bear men in hand, that all true devotion dwelt amongst them, and were enclosed and tied to their Cells and Cloisters: In which unclean cages it is impossible for any true spiritual and holy meditations to have their abiding: for as much as even the very minds and consciences of such unclean birds, are defiled with damnable errors, and Idolatries. Wherefore I would earnestly advise, and heartily entreat thee (Christian Reader) to embrace this book, wherein thou shalt find good precepts, and holy directions, not delivered by rote (as from a Parrot) out of the books and writings of other men: but confirmed by the singular experience of one, who hath long labored the conversion, and confirmation of many other; but especially the mortification and quickening of his own soul and conscience: one, whom indeed I have ever esteemed another Greenham: and herein more happy then he; because he hath lived to pen, and peruse his own labors, and may yet live (by the mercy of God) to correct and amend whatsoever slip of his pen (for in a long work one may happily take a nap, two, or three) shall be showed unto him. Read it therefore (beloved Christian) and that with diligence: and thou shalt find (I doubt not) more true light and direction to a true devout and holy life, then in all the Resolutions of the Jesuitical Father Parsons (though never so refined, as a brick newly washed) or meditations of Friar Granatensis, or any Popish Directories whatsoever. And so I commend thee and all thy holy labors in this and all other good books, especially in the book of books (I mean the holy Bible) to the rich and merciful blessing of God our Father in Jesus Christ.

Blackfriars, London this 26 of May, 1603.



Thine in the Lord, Steph. Egerton.

## **TO THE CHRISTIAN READER - II.**

What be the privileges and high favors of God Almighty, wherewith he hath preferred this age, and in special our nation above all before us, since the days of the holy Apostles, needeth more meditation to move ourselves to thankfulness, then proof to convince our adversaries, who though they should gainsay it, shall gnash their teeth and pine away in grief to behold it. Among all (I may say with the Prophet and the Apostle) this is chief, that God hath so clearly showed his word to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments to Israel; and hath committed to us his holy oracles: Wherein I mean not only that we have the Gospel so publicly and plentifully preached, which (though great) is common to us with many: but withal, that in some admirable manner, God hath revealed his secrets unto us, such as we know no Church upon the earth, in which the true sense of the Scriptures and sound doctrine thereof, are more sincerely embraced and professed. Yea with what store of rare and excellent lights the Lord hath furnished this our Church, he is blind that seeth not, and malicious that will not acknowledge it: wherein though generally it falleth out by human frailty and Satan's subtlety, that there is more light of judgment, then integrity of conscience; yet herein God hath not left himself without witness of many worthy Christians both Preachers and professors of the truth, who lively express the form of holy doctrine into which they are cast, such as upon my uttermost peril I dare profess, the devoutest Papist neither hath nor possibly (in that profession) can attain unto, lacking true faith the right mother and nurse of a godly life. And herein to give one instance in stead of many, take and examine straitly this one work, and if it breathes not out more sound godliness in one leaf, then all their

artificial composed treatises of Resolution (which in their estimation are chief in this argument of a godly life) let me bear my deserved blame. I leave the life of the writer of that Popish book to such as seem upon better knowledge to have set out the same. And for the Author of this Treatise, I may not in modesty say what I know, but could and do desire that his life were so known to all, to whom his writing shall come, as it is to such, who have heard the doctrine and seen the practice hereof in himself these well near thirty years. But to spare the person for his life time, and to foretell what you shall find in his labors. In my simple opinion it might in one principal respect be called the Anatomy of the soul, wherein not only the great and principal parts are laid open, but every vein and little nerve are so discovered, that we may as it were, with the eye behold, as the right constitution of the whole and every part of a true Christian; so the manifold defects and imperfections thereof. Whereto be added most approved remedies for the curing of all spiritual diseases, with like preservatives to maintain our health, in such sort as may be enjoyed in this contagious air, and so in a second respect may be called the physic of the soul. In both which how welcome it shall be to all that love their souls health, I need not doubt: only I would desire the Christian patient, not to be offended with the largeness of the work (as too dear for the poor, and too much to be read over in long time) but consider with me, that if the art of bodily physic be so long, as the father of that art testifieth; then is it no marvel, that this spiritual physic doth as much exceed the other in length, as it doth in dignity. And yet for the relief of such as desire to profit by his labor, great care hath been taken so to set out apart every several matter, that by the help of the Table they may be directed to the particulars, which I persuade myself will be so far from glutting any, though never so weak stomach, that it will rather procure him a better appetite. For simply to say, as I feel, I have not read in any man's writing a more savory style and better relished. All which I leave to everyone to

speak as they find, and so with my strongest desires do commend the fruit of these labors to the blessing of God.

Ezekiel Culverwell.

## **TO THE CHRISTIAN READER - III.**

Christian Reader, I am constrained in commending this spiritual blessing unto thee, to begin with the excuse of a good deed. For although it be a good deed to commend this commendable work, yet must I plead the pardon of my defectiveness in doing it, by alleging my calling thereto; and implead the fulsomeness of the maligners of such holy enterprises, who for the most part distaste all things but vanity. The ear (saith Elihu) trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat, to wit, if the ear be truly spiritual; otherwise there is an uncircumcised ear, where there is an uncircumcised heart: and he that hath an unmortified ear, which is an affection to carnal eloquence, cannot escape a reprobate sense in judging of the wisdom of God. An itching ear requireth a clawing style, and the most readers seek after that which this treatise purposely escheweth. But wisdom will be justified of her children, and the godly hearted will lay that unlooked for imputation upon affectation of brave words, which the holy Ghost layeth upon women's bravery, mentioned in the 3rd of Isaiah, which soon after in the 4th chap, verse. 4, by passage of speech he calleth the filthiness of the daughters of Zion. Something I grant may be yielded by way of indulgence to the weak; but he that seriously seeketh the Lord, will not be offended nor cloyed with that simplicity, which offendeth not God by turning away the mind by trifles from a bent purpose of sound edification.

The matter of this book is right worthy to occupy the minds of men, and will be received of the gracious perusers of it. The rest of the

professors, which like wanton and full fed children begin to play with their meat, and brook nothing but conceited writing and speaking, are to be bewailed; and as for the dogs they are to be detested and denied holy things. The blessing and comfort of grace brought S. Paul to account all things as dung, in comparison; and their illumination (how great soever) is unsanctified, which are not so minded: and if any man love godliness indeed and be good metal, he will bless the fire which is ordained to melt him, and the mold which is made to cast him in: but they which make the founder to melt in vain, shall be called reprobate silver. It is part of the blessing of a work to be wrought by a blessed instrument: and although it be sacrilege to intervert the praise of God; yet it is of religion to take notice of God's chosen vessels, and all men are more affected by such. This is the advantage of this book, I mean the long approved godliness of the Author, as he is a Christian; and his zealous painfulness, as he is a Minister. And if it please God that his pen may be as his tongue hath been, a tree of life, the very leaves thereof will cure him of the sting of Serpents tongues. That which S. Luke testifieth of Barnabas, may (after God's admeasurement) be spoken of him, and hoped of his labors, that he was a good man, and full of the holy Ghost and faith, and much people joined themselves to the Lord. Receive therefore (good Reader) this provision which he hath made for thee of wholesome meat, not caring for conceited cookery, but remember that godly hunger is the best sauce for heavenly food.

Thine in Christ, Francis Merbury.

## **PREFACE TO THE READER.**

Which contains these four things: First, the general sum of the whole. Secondly, the reasons why it was set forth. Thirdly, the matter

and argument of every particular treatise. Fourthly, a directing of the Christian reader, how to read it with most profit.

In so great variety of all learning, as God hath furnished this age withal, it were not only needless, but arrogancy and folly, for me to put any in hope, that I go about to teach that, which hath not been taught, and set forth already by godly and learned brethren. But yet, least any should think my labor vain, in that which I enterprise, I would all such might understand, that howsoever I shall bring no other thing, then some have, in general, or in some part heretofore published; yet they shall not be gluttoned with the same thing in particular, whether they respect the treatise and argument itself, or the manner of following and prosecuting the same. At leastwise, I may say, that there hath not come to my hand any book directly tending to this end, which I propound here in the seven Treatises following, to help the frailty of God's children, and namely, by setting before their eyes as in a glass, the infinite, secret, and deceitful corruptions of the heart: from whence (without a gracious regarding of the same) sore and dangerous evils do arise and break out in their life. Neither have I seen any treatise, and direction particularly drawn and gathered for men's lives to govern and order them, which tieth them to daily use of the same throughout their whole course: of both which my purpose is most chiefly, as well faithfully as lovingly, to entreat, and to aide my poor neighbors and brethren, with that which I have gathered by reading, and noted by experience, if by any means I may be able hereby, to make the Christian way anything more easy and pleasant unto them, then many find it: and to bring it into more price, then the most do value it at.

In few words, this is that which I aim at, that such as have tasted how good the Lord is, and have felt the power of the life to come, by any work of faith and Christian life, which they have obtained by the

preaching of the Gospel, may after that, see their wants, their infirmities, their corruptions, rebellions, hindrances, and other discouragements, from that blessed estate whereinto they are entered: and how they may every day in the best manner, remedy, or at least wise weaken and diminish them, and that they may also behold their liberties and prerogatives, which they have by Christ: as the certainty of God's love, deliverance from the fear of the great and evil day, peace and comfort through faith, and the blessedness of such an estate, and daily enjoy the same. And therefore, not to be as men that have no such privileges, either cast down with needles fear, or possessed with an earthly or vain rejoicing, or destitute of encouragement to walk forward in an heavenly course: But that they may be merry in the Lord, and yet without lightness; sad and heavy in heart for their own sins, and the abominations of the land, and yet without discouragement, or dumpishness: resting and believing in God, without bold presumption, and fearing their own weakness, but yet without dreadful and deadly despairing. And that thus the Christian man, and he who is faithful indeed, may so carry himself in his course, as he may have no thought or purpose to revolt and turn from this hope which is set before him, but be persuaded that he is infinitely encouraged, to hold out constantly therein, against all that might come in his way to the contrary. And that the ungodly may see how such are blessed in comparison of other, and what they themselves go void of which they might enjoy, and therefore may seek how to become not almost, but altogether Christians with them.

To these (I say) who have set themselves in a full, and resolute purpose to pass their days godly in the midst of many encumbrances, and to walk with the Lord, so far as of frail flesh may be obtained (how weak so ever in their own persuasions) to these (I say) I desire in this treatise of mine to be some help and assistance, and to speak plainly, that such as would fain do well, and yet cannot tell how, may

hereby be eased and relieved. And if any (who yet are in superstition, hypocrisy, profaneness, or as yet in darkness) desire to be partakers thereof also, and so to like of that advice and instruction, which is written for the believers, that they be willing to depart from the wicked, crooked, and cursed way, which they have walked in: I should be so far from envying them this blessing, that (although this was not set out directly for them) yet they may understand, that with such a willing mind, as I have undertaken this work for their good who are in Christ already; with the like, I am ready to further and help forward them, who think and know themselves as yet to be strangers from Christ altogether; and to rejoice, if I might understand, that they have been moved hereby with their brethren, to become the true disciples of Christ. Indeed I have not labored so much, to persuade these to return from their misery, and to become penitent, because many both examples of the like, and reasons to move them, are plentifully, plainly, and in good order, extant among them already; and for that I know, that for the most part, they profit not by our writing, who do not before regard and take good by our preaching: and yet they shall have my best advice in the end.

But as for such as have already been in the truth of their hearts converted unto the Lord, and unfeignedly been called back from the former lusts of their ignorance, and the fashion of the world, after the which sometime they framed themselves: for such (I say) I know it is the earnest desire of their hearts, that they may as well have a path-way to godliness, and a direction to the same lie by them, to the which they may always at need resort, when public helps by sermons cannot evermore be enjoyed: as also to be made more fit thereby, to profit by them, when they do repair unto the same. And although I look not for it, that such account should be made of this book among the greatest number, who have resolved with themselves either not to learn or embrace anything more, then already they have,

especially proceeding from a meaner person then themselves: or to scorn whatsoever agreeth not with their humor, and to cavil and quarrel with that, which natural reason doth not allow; yet (wishing better things unto such) I am not discouraged, but for their sake who would desire the same in practice which here they shall find by reading, I will go forward in this enterprise.

I know it can do the best no harm. I am sure (trusting and looking for the blessing of God) that it shall do many good, such I mean as would do well, if they knew how; and would grow wiser, sounder and more constant in faith and a godly life, if they had help and direction thereto plainly set before them. And I am not ashamed to say, that for mine own furtherance as well as other men's, and the better carriage of myself through this my pilgrimage; I have been willing to gather some such things together, as in this small volume I have contrived. Neither had it come into the hands of others, unless such as are of account above myself for their gifts, as well as my neighbors, among whom I have preached the doctrine, had persuaded me to set it forth. Besides all that hath been said, I have chiefly in this enterprise (as God doth know) sought this, that this imperfect and weak labor of mine may stir up and move some of my godly brethren (who for the ability and grace which God hath given them, if their leisure had been as much as mine, might ten-fold more profitably and substantially have undertaken it) to enlarge and perfect the same, the argument being so needful and profitable, to the further benefit of God's Church and people. Another reason of setting out this treatise was this, that they who desire it, may see, by the diligent marking of the same, the beauties of the Christian life more clearly, then by many Christians lives it can be seen, and that it may be brought into greater account with many, who think it (through error) overburdensome.



And partly also I was moved hereunto by this reason, that the Papists cast in our teeth, that we have nothing set out for the certain and daily direction of a Christian, when yet they have published (they say) many treatises of that argument. For answer to the first point of this objection, they cannot deny (but that they care not what they say, to bring the people out of love with our religion) they cannot (I say) deny, that both in catechisms, sermons, and other treatises, there is set forth by us that which may clearly direct Christians, and stir up godly devotion in them, though all be not gathered together into one volume: for the second part concerning their treatises, I grant there are two which I have seen, set forth by them in our English tongue, the one called a Christian Directory, the other the Exercise of a Christian life, wherein the author doth, though both superstitiously and nothing properly, go about to teach and give direction for every day in the week; (the one bearing the name of Robert Parsons the King of Spain's confessor: the other by an Italian a Jesuit Doctor in Divinity, and translated into English by some favorite of Popery) the first is nothing less than a direction for a Christian though it be called a Directory, tending rather to persuade men to resolve with themselves to leave some gross evils, then to show them soundly how to attain pardon, or teaching how to live Christianly: the other is a ridiculous tying men to a daily task of reading some part of the story of Christ's passion, and saying certain prayers throughout the week every day a task; but indeed nothing less than directing, after the will of God, him who desires to lead a Christian life. Both of them I dare boldly affirm, being deceived themselves, do deceive others, especially the simple, who is not able to discern and try the lying spirit in them. The one, that is to say, Parsons, hath under a pretense of a holiness and devotion, set down sundry impediments to resolution: But yet they are put in among other things to take away the harshness and tartness of manifold errors of merit, and other superstition mixed with them and

upholden in that religion, and as it were, with sugar to season them, which else no taste could abide, and in the depth of a subtle heart, put in, to make the world believe, that the Popish religion is the only holy religion, and the professors thereof the godliest livers; when yet Antichrist is their captain, and head, or (as they will not deny) the Pope of Rome, who yet doth, and for these many years hath upholden and maintained open, and almost infinite heresies and abominations.

And as their religion and worship is composed and framed of heresies and lies, and a confused heap of superstitions, and outward dead works, even Jewish and Heathenish ceremonies; so the persons themselves who profess they know most, and that they are able to give rules unto others, upholden and building upon so rotten foundations, are furthest off from well guiding others, so that no man may ever look by any Popish direction to live Christianly. Although I will not dissemble what I think, namely, that some do mean more simply and truly then the rest, and think that they serve God aright having devout minds, but being ignorant of the truth, must needs be deceived.

But of Master Parsons book of Resolution, seeing he and some other have set it out in a glossing style to insinuate with the ignorant and unlearned reader, that he seeks no other thing but to draw him to piety and godliness, I cannot forbear, but I must say a little, which otherwise I would not have done. And the rather, for that I know, he hath snared many simple people's consciences thereby, who being themselves willing to be led in a right way, believe that he means as he speaketh; and therefore are left, I say, deceived, and in a bottomless gulf; out of the which, if God help them not some other way, it is not possible for them to get. And this I say first, for the delivering of such out of the snare and maze in which they have lost

themselves by reading of that book, that although there be a pretended show of godliness in it, and much superstition; yet the best of it is far from true piety and godliness, seeing that, and every part of it proceedeth from faith joined with assurance of God's favor, which is that alone that purifieth the heart, and maketh it able to bring fourth fruits of amendment of life; without which, men's best actions are wrought by the strength of corrupt nature, and are fruits of the flesh, and works of darkness, and so abominable. And yet this faith do Papists make no reckoning of, neither therefore can the book of Resolution teach or hold it.

Further, I say that the law only is urged in that book, without teaching the poor soul that may be terrified thereby, how to lay hold on the promise of eternal life, and without the Gospel: the truth and glad ridings whereof, is only able to set at liberty the consciences of such as are strangled by the threats and terrible curse of the law: for if that truth make free (as our Savior saith) then are men free in deed. And whereas it may be objected to me, that I do the author of the book open wrong in saying, that he joineth not the Gospel with the law; for he that readeth it, may find, that he speaketh of Jesus Christ, that he was given by his father to the world, that many might be saved; and of the promise: and how say I then that he teacheth the law without the Gospel? I answer, that he doth indeed mention both the promises of the Gospel, and also Christ; and this he doth in that chapter which is entitled [diffidence in God's mercy] but yet is that true that I say: For the Gospel is the power of salvation to him that believeth: and it is not the Gospel if it be not believed: for that is a part of the description of it: Now believing or faith hath assurance going with it, as I showed out of the epistle to the Hebrews: Which the author of that book with the rest of his religion, doth flatly deny; and therefore it is clear, that he doth not teach the Gospel, neither in that book doth plainly and soundly guide the wandering soul which

seeth itself lost, to find remission of his sin, and everlasting life; and consequently, that he doth not direct his reader to live godly, as I said, but holdeth him in darkness and in the state of damnation, and deceiveth him.

And what reckoning he maketh of faith (which the word of God preferreth before all other things, and saith, that it overcometh all difficulties in the world) we may see by his own words, in his preface fol. 6. I exhort the discreet reader (saith he) of whatsoever religion and faith he be, to enter into the careful study and exercise of good deeds, assuring him, that this is the right way, to obtain at God's hands the light of true belief. And a little after he saith, It is more easy to believe as we ought, then to live, as we should. Here we see, he prefers good deeds before faith: as if the fruit should be said to be more precious, then the tree that bears it. And yet as not marking what he said, he uttereth these words a little before, which cannot stand with the other: Our fathers received one uniform faith from their mother the holy Catholic Church, and did attend only to build upon that foundation good works and virtuous life, as holy Scripture commandeth us to do. Here he affirmeth, that good life cometh from faith. Thus while he speaketh such contraries, sometime, that good works must be built on the foundation of faith; and with another breath, that good life is the right way to bring faith, (and yet all may see he speaketh of one and the self-same faith in both places) must he not needs by so teaching, deceive the simple reader while he not being able to understand what is taught, cannot possibly practice that which he ought?

And it was not to be doubted (to speak even in charity as in conscience we ought) that the said author promising in that his book of Resolution, that he would add two other parts to it, (as thereby confessing, that it alone was an insufficient work of itself, to be set

forth; and therefore dangerous to entangle and snare the ignorant) and yet cannot in eighteen years find a time to fulfill his promise; it was not to be doubted (I say) but that he was well content to deceive and trouble many that should read it: As if one should but preach the wrath of God for sin to a hundredth persons, (whereas his book hath been in the hands of thousands) and should come no more in eighteen years, to help them out of fear and doubt, and how to live afterwards, it would be condemned and that justly, and cried out of by all advised people. And yet we may conclude, without any doubt, knowing his religion what it is (if ever he had any such meaning, to set out two other parts) that they should have been as sound as this one is, that is to say, unwholesome, full of damnable errors, and uncomfortable: For can men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? No more can any sound fruit be reaped or comfort gotten by false and unsavory doctrine. But for Parsons devotion (whereof his book bears so great a show) or how little of the labor was his, or how little honesty is in the man, yea rather how great iniquity: let them of his own religion testify, I mean the secular priests in their books against the Jesuits.

But to say no more of Parsons: The other hath little in him worthy any account or reckoning, and to this purpose very nothing. To go forward therefore, seeing this was one cause why I took this work in hand, because the Jesuits cast in our teeth the want of such books, as may direct a Christian aright through his whole course towards the kingdom of heaven, and yet that which they teach tending thereto, is but as poison in a golden cup; although, as I have said, there are many of my brethren, who had been fitter for this service then myself, if they had not been employed some other way: yet I nothing doubt by the help of God, to frame out of the word of God by that little help of my knowledge and experience, such a direction for Christians (all ostentation, and comparison of learning set aside) as

shall give them small advantage of boasting, and shall be both more pleasing to God, and more for the comforting the heart of him, who listeth to be directed by it, then popery can afford: and withal, a direction, that hath not only been shaped out after the rules of the Scripture, but also such as hath been and is practiced and followed so far forth, as of sinful flesh may be looked for, both of minister and people, and approved of those who have excelled, and gone before many, in both.

And although I deny not, but that many things might have been far better set down, and expressed, then I am able to do; yet that none think me to have taken in hand a matter above my reach, and wherein I have no skill, thus much I say, that for these twenty years and more I have aimed at this, in my reading, preaching, and living, and in the observing of myself, and the example of others, what communion and near acquaintance there may be betwixt God and a Christian, what hold may be laid on the promises of God, what strength may be gotten against sin, what freedom and liberty we may have by faith, what settledness and constancy in a godly life, what comfort, and rejoicing the children of God by his free grant, may have, even in this life, and that both sound and constant, which shall not be taken from them: also how far the spirit may overcome the flesh, and how the devil may be resisted. And more especially for these seven years and more, I have more particularly set myself about the matter, which in this book is contained (which how weakly soever it be performed, I have therein a good conscience:) First, to show, both how a man may become a true believer, be brought into the favor of God, and afterwards how he may be directed to lead his life daily: And therefore I have not suddenly nor unadvisedly set upon this. And what help I have been able to get from others, as my convenient opportunity hath given leave, I have not neglected. The which I set down (as I said) that none may think me fantastically to

have gone about to broch some novelty, but rather to offer that to the people of God, which hath with good advice been gathered for their edifying. But now to return, the last reason moving me to take this work in hand, is, that they who have enjoyed my ministry above these twenty years, might have me (as many of them have oft desired) after a sort putting them in remembrance of that which I have taught them in my life time, many years after I shall be taken from among them. This shall suffice to be spoken of my intent and purpose in this treatise, with the reasons thereof.

Now it remaineth further to acquaint the reader with the order, which I use in the same, and to give some instructions, that he may read it with the more profit; and that it may be more plain and easy to understand (which I do especially intend) then otherwise it should be. First, therefore, because I have written it for their sakes chiefly, which are truly called to be God's Children, and have an interest in his promises, as being converted to him from the subjection of the devil: first I say, my purpose is in the foremost treatise to show, who are his, and who they are which in an holy, and humble manner may rest satisfied in his promises, against all dreadful fear and doubt which might disquiet them: that so neither the loose livers may deceive themselves with an opinion of that, which belongeth not to them: nor God's children be deprived of that, which is their own, and the ignorant of both sorts that list, may learn to know better and amend their estate. In the second, I mean to show, what course of life such persons must walk in, throughout their days, and how they are to carry themselves both towards God and men, which I think expedient to lay forth as clearly as I can, and in some ample manner for the more full satisfying of the ignorant sort. From these two, all the other points handled in this book do arise. Therefore in the third, I will show what are the means whereby this life may be maintained, and how the believer shall use the same, to the end that this whole

and great work of worshipping and serving God, may not be taken for a bare matter of knowledge, as the most do make it: or (which is little better) for a serving of God by halves, as too many professors of the Gospel do use it: but for a faithful regarding of our ways, that they may be shaped out after God's will.

Now this practicing of the godly life is performed by following a daily direction to guide us, and whiles we do every day with conscience set ourselves to honor and obey God, as in our callings, and by other occasions offered, we shall be able, and not wanderingly and uncertainly, as we have been wont to do. And so this shall be set down in the fourth treatise. And this is one of the points in this book which requireth to be read again and again, as being neither commonly entreated of, and of singular use to such as desire to take good by it, especially not being able otherwise to guide themselves. In the fifth, I make the reader acquainted with the lets, which will hinder him (though he be willing to be directed daily) from this course, except he will be persuaded to arm himself with such helps, as whereby he may withstand them: and remedies against these lets shall in this fifth treatise be set down, as far as shall be thought expedient. The sixth shall set before thee sundry privileges and blessings, which God doth peculiarly bequeath unto, and bestow upon his beloved ones, besides such benefits as they have in common with the men of the world. By the which, as by other reasons, the faithful may see themselves persuaded, with much more cheerfulness, and greater willingness to lead a Christian life daily, and to shine as lights in example to others. In the seventh and last, such objections as may be brought and alleged by any, either weak Christians, or carnal cavilers, against the practicing of the daily direction, shall be sufficiently answered; that thereby the truth appearing more clearly, many such as desire unfeignedly to do well, and yet have not learned to guide themselves by any plain direction,



out of the Scriptures, may have this as a help unto them to see that which the Scripture hath revealed hereof. All which, though I direct not this work to the unreformed, may be instead of an exhortation unto all loose and careless persons, (though more briefly, seeing there is enough written of that argument) to move them to rouse up themselves, and to awake out of their deadly sleep, and not to cast away their souls for the love of their sins, (which they may be sure that God will find out howsoever they hide them) but to seek betimes, that they be unburdened of them, cast them up as a most filthy gorge, and avoid the vengeance of God's wrath which will otherwise most surely come upon them for it: For though sin be sweet in the committing of it, yet it will be bitter, when it comes to be repented of: and most bitter, when without repentance, it must be accounted for.

Now it remaineth to direct the reader how to bestow his time profitably herein, and how he may read it to his benefit. For I doubt nothing, but he that shall be conversant in it, desiring to be directed in his course, shall think his time well spent, so as he be helped to understand the same. First therefore let him read the contents of it briefly set down in the table before the book, to help his memory; then the marginal notes of the chapters. And if he conceive and understand the short sum of it so set down; then let him read the book itself, till he be acquainted with and understand it: wherein if his capacity be the weaker and shallower, he must desire the help of some which are more skillful (and better able to see the drift, scope and meaning of it) than himself, especially in such points of it, as are more hard and difficult, either to understand, or to practice. For although many shall have no need of this directing of them to read it with profit, because they can easily direct themselves when they once know the general parts, and argument of it, as before is mentioned: yet because my desire herein is as well to help and benefit the plain,

and simple, (such as many of them are, amongst whom I have preached the same) as well as to bring the wiser and more learned sort acquainted with the practice of it, therefore I know they shall have need thereof.

Now when they shall understand it in some good sort, let them weigh and consider, how far forth they have had use of it heretofore, as whether they have according to the first part of this book, by the ministry of any sound preacher of the Gospel, attained to the assurance of their salvation, and of the forgiveness of their sins, wherein if any will take it as granted, though falsely, (as they are most ready to do so, who have least felt the burden of their sins, and therefore are indeed furthest off from it) herein, I say, if any will needs deceive themselves, I cannot help it, but they are like to read the rest with less fruit and comfort, and to go without the use of it in their lives, whatsoever they hope for. And therefore such I advise to take most pain in the first part: I mean in the doctrine of it, and reading other treatises concerning the matter, as Master Mores and other catechisms; and Master Perkins works, namely, his book entitled the grain of mustard seed: And to raise all the doubts they can to any experienced teacher or brother, and to look for, and see those things work upon them which are taught there, both the doctrine of humiliation, and also of justification and deliverance.

If this be attained, let them consider for the better assuring themselves hereof, that they cannot but affect, love, embrace, and delight in the doctrine of sanctification, and repentance from dead works, I mean they shall desire to practice the godly and Christian life when they see that it is the commandment of him who loveth them most dearly, and what it is, and wherein it consisteth, which is the sum of the second treatise of this book. And to this end, let them read, and by marking seek, (as such who would find) that they may

see what sin there is in them which they are not willing nor desirous to forsake (if there be any) or among duties generally appertaining to all, or particularly touching themselves, which they cannot submit themselves unto. If there be either of these found in them, as that they cannot leave nor be brought to renounce some particular sins, nor obtain of themselves to be subject to some special duties, as thinking it too strict (as thus it may be with many, and no doubt is) such must know, that it is the doctrine of the Scripture, that all the commandments of God be had in account of us, and conscience made of one as well as of another: which if they see and acknowledge according to the word of God, they cannot but submit themselves thereunto, if they have rightly embraced the doctrine of the former treatise, that as in judgment and knowledge they yield; so their heart and affections may go with the same. And so doing, God will work in them by little and little (seeking it by prayer of faith) even as he wrought the like in them before, and weakened such rebelliousness in their hearts already.

If therefore the teachable and Christian reader be thus far wrought upon by the spirit of God, that he thus favor, approve, and give over himself to be made truly repentant, which is that that is required in the second treatise of this book; then is he fit to occupy himself about, and to be conversant in the third and fourth part of it, that is to say, in the doctrine which requireth a daily walking in a Christian course, by the use of such helps as are appointed of God for that purpose; and some of them also daily, as in the proper place shall appear. For every true Christian is to know, that the religion and worship of God must be in use and practice among the embracers of it, as well one day as another. But how shall any be able to keep his heart in frame, and reform his life daily by the means which God hath appointed, as in the third and fourth part of this book is required: except he be first a liker, and an allower of all known points

of duty, and do heartily renounce all evil, as is required in the second part? Which being done, let him look to grow daily more strong in faith, whereby he may hold, and keep fast the certainty of God's favor daily, and constantly. And not as too many (and yet the people of God) do, who are not acquainted with this: that their confidence should be maintained daily, or a good conscience in their particular actions regarded, and that on one day as another, but think it enough at sometimes to have this care. Neither let any look to repel this as too strict, under pretense of weighty affairs, and their own infirmity. For this is but the delusion of the devil, as shall be showed, who will easily persuade it to be more than needeth. This is that which must be learned out of the third and fourth part.

And when this is understood, approved, consented unto, and aimed at, the fifth part of the book shall be clear and easy to understand, and what use he should make of it, namely, of the lets and hindrances which the devil raiseth up to hold him back from this course of life, and the practice of the same: of the which some I will set down, and help him the better to know many others thereby. And he that shall endeavor to direct his life, and take heed to his ways, as he shall by God's word be taught, shall break through many of the lets, which yet shall strongly hold back and hinder other men, as the fifth part will show: and if he be for a season withdrawn from a godly course, yet he shall there find helps and remedies to recover again; and little ease, otherwise.

And if there be any difficulty in conforming a man's self after this forementioned doctrine (as I deny not but the flesh will find many) yet against them all, let him proceed and read with good regard the sixth Treatise, wherein are set down the manifold and goodly prerogatives and privileges, which God hath bequeathed to his people to hearten them on, and encourage them to godliness, and to

make the Christian life easy; and he shall see great light, and find exceeding force therein, to stir him up to go forward mightily against all fainting. And then he shall not be moved for all the objections, cavils and fleshly reasons which he shall read in the seventh part. For the comfort and experience, which he shall partly enjoy already, and partly hope for and expect afterwards, shall make them vanish away as smoke, although otherwise they are able to hurt and sting, as fire. And then when in the due consideration of the whole, he shall see what the blessedness and manifold good things are, which he in part hath already, and shall afterwards enjoy both here and in the life to come, he shall see what infinite cause he hath to praise God for his portion, that he hath rather beautified and blessed him with his favor and graces than many other, whereby he may walk so comfortably, and that in this vale of miseries, to God's kingdom.

And thus I advise thee (good reader, as I know it shall be best for thee) to bestow thy travel about this book: wherein I appoint thee no certain time, nor hours, seeing all which would profit by it, cannot spend their time alike about this, or any other such exercise. But this know, that this book tendeth to teach thee the practice of thy knowledge, and not to know only: and that I have gathered together into this one, the things which are dispersedly contained in many other. And therefore in that respect, over and besides the ordinary reading of the holy Scriptures, thou mayest bestow the more time about it, as thy leisure will permit, considering that once or twice reading a book for practice, is not enough.

Lastly, seeing the whole matter herein contained, is to serve thee and stand thee in stead, as setting before thee a direction to govern thy whole life, thou must not think thy labor and time much, though thou beest occupied in it for many years together: for as much as the fruit shall be greater, the longer that thou hast been exercised in it:

and yet thy labor less, yea easy and pleasant: for so shalt thou grow better acquainted with the use of it, which in one word is to make thy life more sweet and savory, then thou couldest look for, that is, happy here, and hereafter, forever. Read therefore not only to be able to report what thou hast found here, but especially to find it thine own which I do teach: and to be settled daily in the government which this doctrine drawn out of his word offereth thee, so as thou mayest see that God, in the setting forth of it, hath directed me.

Read with a quiet, teachable and a meek spirit, desirous of that which I labor to bring thee to, rather than with a curious head to carpe and cavil; or censure that which thou dost not practice nor follow. A dram of grace is better than a pound of censorious wittiness: remember that all our natural gifts, and faculties of our souls should be sanctified: I go about to make thee see thyself inwardly and outwardly to be trained up in God's family: where the heart must be well seasoned, as well as thy whole life well ordered, till thou findest that which many a thrifty person doth in his outward estate; namely, that diet to be ordinary with him, which sometime had been feasting cheer: for, when a poor man by his travel and pain hath brought this to pass, he thinks his estate good, and that which pleaseth him exceedingly well: So, labor thou in thy spiritual work and serving of God, to find that gain, and thriving therein, that thou mayest make thy soul as joyful every day, and at as great peace with God, as sometime thou scarcely haddest obtained once in the week or month. Which grace and prerogative that thou mayest make much of, when thou hast it, look back and remember with thanks unfeigned how far thou hast been off from it, and how little hope thou once haddest of obtaining it, when thou wert easily mastered of thy sins and passions, and know that it must cost him many a prayer, and groan for it, who is yet without it, before he shall be partaker of it.

RICHARD ROGERS.

## **THE FIRST TREATISE,**

SHOWING WHO BE THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD.

### **CHAP. 1.**

The sum and order of this first Treatise.

Although my chief purpose be to direct the true Christian, who is already a believer, how to walk daily through the course of this life, in such wise as he may find a very sweet and effectual taste of eternal happiness, even here (which few do think can be obtained) yet I have thought it meet: first, to show who are true believers, and the children of God, and how men are brought unto this estate, and thereby may know that they are so. Partly for them who desire to be directed in a Christian life, that they may have this ready at hand by them, to show them that they are the Lord's, notwithstanding many doubts be oft raised by Satan against them, and that others may learn to know it, who are yet ignorant of it, as without the which, in vain should they go about a godly life. Which as it is the weightiest and chiefest point of all others in divinity, and the ground of the rest which I have taken in hand to entreat of; so it is with the greatest regard to be dealt in, whether we respect those, which unfold and lay open the same, or those, which desire to be instructed, and persuaded in the truth thereof.

For it comes to pass by our corrupt nature, and slowness of heart to believe, and Satan's subtlety many ways beguiling us, that we in nothing more deceive ourselves, then in, and about the assurance of

salvation: for proof hereof, we may understand that some, yea, many thousands think that no man can know whiles he liveth here that he is the Lord's, neither can have any assurance of his favor till his death, unless it be by special revelation. And this is the error of the Papists. On the other side, many think that this is not so hard a question, as that any that profess the gospel should doubt of their salvation (notwithstanding our Savior Christ saith that his flock is but small, and that in comparison but few shall be saved.) And this is the opinion of our common Protestants, which say Lord Lord, and yet are not prepared to do the will of the Lord, and therefore far from entering into the Kingdom of heaven.

Besides both these, many poor ignorant souls think whiles they do well and serve God, they may be assured of their redemption by Christ: but if they be by any means hindered from pleasing God, yea, though it be by mere frailty, and corruption of nature, then they can have no hold thereof; which uncertainty, though it cleave unto many who are dear unto the Lord, yet it is to be counted their error and sin, and they must be brought to a more stayed judgment, then thus to think: that either there is changeableness with God, or to be so much their own enemies, as by means of this error to fill their lives with such uncomfortableness, and deprive themselves hereby of this assurance of God's love, which is the strongest persuasion to true godliness.

These are some few of a great many doubts and erroneous opinions about this matter, as after shall appear. For resolution whereof, though many things must be said, yet the matter itself may clearly and soundly be set down in few words.

To the end therefore that these and such like many see how far differing God's thoughts are from man's, and (as I have said before)



that all which have received this doctrine, may have it before their eyes daily in some easy and familiar manner to confirm them, I will, as God hath made me able, set down that which is expedient for this point: and this I have thought good to refer to these three heads. First, to show how a man may attain to this, to know that he is the child of God, and how God worketh it by his spirit in the hearts of those which are his. Secondly, how the weak believers may uphold themselves in temptation, and so be stayed, as seeing that they differ apparently from those, which are not the Lord's. And thirdly, how they may afterwards more easily prove that they have true faith, and be able to confirm and preserve the same: and find how much such an estate is to be desired.

And for the plain declaration of the first point hereof, these three things must be handled. The first, the clear knowledge of man's misery. The second, of his redemption and deliverance out of the same. And the third, how both these ought to work upon their hearts, and what fruit they will bring forth by the operation of the holy Ghost in such as shall be saved: That is to say, that the one which is the knowledge of misery, will wound and humble their hearts, when they shall see thereby, that they are but dead and damned people. The other will heal the sores of their hearts, and lift them up again, to the beholding of all their sins pardoned, and their woe removed so, as if they had never been pressed down with the same. And to this shall be adjoined a discourse of the lets of faith, and what desire it is from which it cometh.

## **CHAP. 2.**

Of man's misery.

To begin therefore with their misery, and briefly to speak of it, and the next branch (seeing they are of others largely handled) no man must think that it is the estate wherein God at the first created them, either Adam the father of all the world, or his posterity which was then in his loins.

Sure it is (I say) that it was not thus with mankind in the beginning: for God then made all things good, and man amongst other creatures he made holy, and happy, the lord of all the creatures which were upon the earth, little inferior to the Angels, endued with infinite blessings, full of beauty and glory. So that when it might be seen that nothing was wanting but this, that he was not altogether free from losing this blessed estate, yet even there the devil took an occasion against him, and deceived him, and his posterity, and cast them from that happy condition which before they enjoyed.

And yet if this had been all the harm that mankind by the malice of the devil sustained, it had been little in respect of that which fell upon him. For behold, besides the loss of his felicity, he was plunged into extreme misery and desolation, which consisteth of these two branches, that he doth always, and in all things offend God, being able to do nothing but that which displeaseth him, as having his heart always and only evil. And secondly, that he in all this is odious to God, and most justly accursed of him. Mans sin is not only that transgression of Adam in most unnatural and treacherous rebellion, and disobedience, whereof he is most justly guilty with Adam, and hath his part (as being to stand or fall with him) but another which riseth out of this, even that infection of all the powers and members both of the soul and body. Which as poison put into a cup of wine doth make it deadly, dispersing itself into the same: in like manner this corruption or concupiscence, which by the first sin of Adam is spread over his posterity, doth poison his whole nature: so that no

sound part is found in him from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. And from hence it is that the understanding, even the excellentest power of the mind, is filled with blindness and darkness, and savoreth not the things which are of God. The conscience is wounded, seared, or defiled some other way, and never soundly peaceable. The memory forgetting good things wholly, or remembering neither good or evil aright, and as it ought, as experience forceth the best to complain. The will is captive and of no strength to do good, neither wanteth ability to that which is evil. And thereafter is he carried of his affections, as a chariot on her wheels, only to that which displeaseth God. What should I say more? For who can choose but bewail and lament such a distressed and woeful estate of the soul of man, which sometimes having been framed after the image of God, in true holiness and righteousness, is now both empty of that grace, and filled with all filthiness of sin and uncleanness? But alas, who believeth this or consenteth to it, that it is true that man (who hath so good an opinion and high conceit of himself) should yet be indeed so far off from that which he dreameth of, and in such bondage and slavery, as he would seem to be farthest off from the least part thereof? But (to go forward) if his conversation and course of living, which is the untimely fruit of this bitter root, were laid out in her colors (which I must only very briefly touch) it were able to make him who thinketh himself most innocent, to appear most vile and loathsome in his own eyes, ashamed of himself, and to hide himself in a dungeon that no other might behold him. For (to speak of the actions of the mind) what are his cogitations about heavenly matters, but errors, falsehood and lyes? What are the wishes and desires of his heart, but earthly, and fleshly, in degree one above another, till he being led away of his concupiscence, is enticed, and so consenteth thereto, defendeth it, and is hardened? What is the outward behavior, but a yielding up of the members of the body, as instruments and weapons of sin, even the sin of the tongue, and

sin of the life? In so much that he is all ways, and in all things, and therefore out of measure, sinful. As Paul though he lived after the most strict order of the Pharisees, which was in show far above many; yet when he was converted could say, I was a blasphemmer, an oppressor, a persecutor: So that it is most truly verified which is written, that he neither is, nor can be obedient to the law of God, and that he can do nothing but sin.

The sins of man are as the hairs of his head, and sand of the seashore, innumerable, and his best actions (as his prayers) are no better than abominable before God, as Solomon speaketh: He that turneth his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abominable. Oh, it is not imagined of thousands that there is any such evidence to be brought against the inhabitants of the earth, even the unworthy sons of men, which yet were sometime by creation the sons of God. For the most ungodly which can be heard of, will have some goodness to be found in them: so far off is it, that they will yield to this censure, that all their life is sinful. And therefore it is no marvel though men account of themselves as they do, everyone flying to this shelter, that he hopeth he is not the worst of others. For the clearer laying open of these sins particularly, some view of God's law thorough every commandment is to be taken: which I would here myself have set down, but that I shall be occasioned in another place to do the same.

But all this sin which thus ruleth and reigneth in man, making him not much unlike the devils themselves, is but one part of the misery which he is in, yea and the least of the two, in their eyes and judgment, who are the greatest number in the world.

The other part thereof is, that for this sin he is subject to all those fearful and horrible plagues which God hath threatened, and

executeth in the world upon the committers thereof, and to that endless punishment of condemnation in the world to come, which is the principal and most just desert of every sin. The particular vexations and calamities which belong to sinners in this life are innumerable, and not to be expressed: but some for the rest it shall be fit to mention, and the rather for that many thousands never dream of, and much less are troubled with any such matter. And first, as the curse of God is upon all creatures for man's cause; so it is less to be doubted, that it is cast upon man himself. So that whatsoever he doth, or wheresoever he becometh, the wrath and anger of God followeth and accompanieth him: Cursed he is in the field, and cursed in the house, cursed in his basket, and in his store: and as Moses speaketh of all the creatures, wherein he should take his repast and delight, saying: Cursed is the earth for thy sake, thorns and briars it shall bring forth unto thee. From hence come all the dearth's, famines, penury, and poverty, which everywhere are cried out of. In his body, sickness, diseases of many kinds, aches, griping's, swellings, bursting's, and other pains intolerable. In the senses, deafness, blindness, numbness, and such like, which should make any heart to quake and tremble to hear them but named. As for friends and kindred, wife and children, father and mother, or whatsoever may be thought of, which men are wont to take greatest pleasure in: how can they delight man's heart soundly, or be pleasant unto him, when they are mixed with this sauce? The Lord accurseth them, he will bring him to judgment for them, even for enjoying them whereto they have no right nor lawful liberty, as being not intitled to them by Christ, who is heir and Lord of all. If there were but a sword hanging with the point downward over a man's head, which were sitting at a royal banquet, what pleasure could he take in the variety of his dainties? But it is another manner of slaying a man, if oft in one hour he must be constrained with fear to remember and think on it, this moment will they take thy soul from thee.

But this goeth not so near men's hearts as it ought, whiles they have one objection or other (as it were water) to quench the force and heat of it. For all men (they say) are not in this miserable estate, except someone or few, who be weary of their lives, and make all their other delights unpleasant to them for the same. This (as unwise) they object, because they are moved with nothing but that which they see with their outward eyes, the voice of God pierceth not their hearts, although it pronounceth as well to him that escapeth all these (if any such could be found) as to him who hath been plagued with them all, even to one as to another without respect of persons: Woe be to the inhabitants of the earth, because they have sinned! So long as this word shall be true, no man's estate is better than another, all are under the wrath of God: Therefore let no man deceive himself, God is not mocked. How this ought to affect the heart of him that heareth it, we shall see hereafter: but he that hardeneth his heart at the hearing of this, because he feeleth not, neither seeth any such thing, shall surely come to evil.

I have not yet spoken of the plagues and punishments which take hold upon the soul, which are yet more fearful than those of the body, if so be they could as easily be discerned. A man to be given up to his own vile lusts, like a brute beast to wallow in filthiness, who might have shined as an Angel in goodness, is there any of judgment, which counteth it not amongst the most fearful judgments? To be utterly darkened and destitute of the true knowledge of God and of the life to come (the knowledge whereof is the beauty of the world) and to be hastening to endless woe, and yet not to understand it: what part of misery can be greater in this world? To be so hardened in heart as to be past all feeling and remorse, to fall into utter desperation without recovery by anything he can do: such madness, frenzy, and heaps of the like, can anything be thought more full of horror? And all these is woeful man under. There is none which hath

not brought himself into the depth of them all: which is all (I may say truly) that he hath to glory of. So that I think it cannot be denied but that he is miserable: unto the which to add (as the shutting up of all) the remediless fears, and deep doubts, which oft bring anguish here, the pains and torture of both soul and body in the end of this life, when both must take up their dwelling in hell; who so shall hear it, must needs confess, that there wanteth herein no piece of misery. But seeing the Scripture itself calleth it pain unspeakable, I will not go about to describe it, least I should any way seem to make it less than it is. It is sufficient for this purpose that it is most extreme, easeless, and endless. This I have said of the misery of man, and of both the parts of it, as I did purpose, and that in as few sentences as well I might, and fewer in deed, then such a weighty matter would have required, but that it is elsewhere handled by others. And I have determined to say no more then I must needs, of those things, which are set forth at large both plainly by many learned brethren, and in very good sort and order already.

These two points of man's misery are to be known as an especial part of God's truth, of him whom the Lord will save. For he which knoweth not this, swelleth, and is puffed up, and goeth on in deep security, and cannot do otherwise as long as he is ignorant of this point: therefore the Lord bringeth him, on whom he purposeth to show mercy, to the preaching of his word, and namely his law, which showeth him his sin and damnation: so that he shall clearly understand it, and that he as well as any other is under the power of it.

But here I think it not unseasonable to add this (seeing ignorant people, which lie yet in their sins, do harden their hearts at the hearing of this) that none have just cause to quarrel with the Lord: for if anything spoken of in this argument, displease them, they may

thank themselves. But to him they are infinitely beholding, that he brings this hidden secret to light among them, that they seeing the plague which is coming towards them, may avoid it, and be roused out of the present danger in which they are. And further they may understand, that God alloweth not his ministers, who publish this message of man's woeful estate, to deliver it barely and nakedly, and to preach the law only, but to join the glad tidings of the Gospel with it in their ministry, and to preach remission of sins with the urging of repentance, and with the pricking of the people's hearts by terror and sorrow for their sins: as our Savior, John the Baptist, and other his faithful servants did. For as none can believe, except they repent; so none can repent, unless they believe.

And therefore, I also, in the former point having showed how this knowledge of his miserable estate must be preached unto him that shall be saved, am now to show, that he prepareth other doctrine most fit for him that hath learned the former: namely, that he causeth most joyful and glad tidings of a full and sufficient remedy against all such misery to be preached unto him, without which, how intolerable should the condition of such be?

## **CHAP. 3.**

Of the knowledge of redemption and deliverance.

This remedy therefore I will first lay forth, and then show how God will have him to understand and know it, that when he is enlightened to know the will of God both in the misery of man and in his redemption, he may (as God hath appointed) have them both, work kindly on him, and so know himself the child of God, and heir of salvation; seeing without some knowledge of both, no man is either rightly humbled or exalted. And although there be many which know



both points, so as some can teach them to others, and yet have use of neither: yet can none be saved without the knowledge of both. The sum of all, which is to be known of him, is contained in this short sentence: Christ Jesus preached (as he is revealed in the Gospel) is salvation unto all that believe: and more fully in this saying of S. John: God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And again, S. Paul: This is a true saying, and by all means worthy to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Out of these places, as also many other, to the full and plain declaration of this remedy, these four things are to be considered. First, what it is, and wherein it consisteth. Secondly, by whom it is wrought. Thirdly, how it is brought to light and revealed. And fourthly, how it is received and embraced. Now as concerning the first, the only sufficient remedy for the saving of man, is to satisfy God's justice, which by sin is violated: without which satisfaction, the wrath of God cannot be appeased, nor his favor obtained, and so there can be no redemption. For how should the Lord be perfectly just, if he should change this righteous sentence of his law, that every transgressor is cursed, and only the perfect keeper of the law blessed? Now then God's justice is satisfied only by these two means: First, by suffering the punishment due to sin, which is the curse of God; and the perfect keeping of the law, without which there can be no deliverance from sin and condemnation. The only remedy of our misery consisting herein, we may clearly see that it is out of ourselves, and not in any other creature: for neither we, nor any other creature for us, is able either to sustain the curse, much less to overcome it: or perfectly to fulfill the law, which is impossible to flesh. Whereby is quite overthrown the foundation of Popery, and all opinion of merit, or of anything in man to avail to his justification.

But to go forward to the second point, to show by whom it is purchased: This remedy, which could be had by no other, is appointed by the Father, undertaken and wrought by Christ, and sealed in men's hearts by the holy Ghost. It is wrought (I say) and found only and wholly in Jesus Christ, God and man, who being perfect God took our human nature on him; and in both became a most merciful Mediator betwixt his father and us, to reconcile us to him: and both suffered the full weight of God's curse due to our sin, by the power of his Godhead overcoming the same, as also fulfilled the law for us, whereby he fully satisfied the justice of God. So that most truly it is said, that salvation is in no other, but that in him only is the whole remedy of the misery of mankind to be found: There is given no other name under heaven (as the holy Ghost speaketh) whereby we must be saved: So that whosoever hath the Son (as S. John saith) for to redeem him, hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life. And to make up the whole matter: if any should ask how Christ's redemption is made man's, he is to know, that God his father of his marvelous love gave him freely (even as he had long before promised him) with all his whole work of redemption, as the Apostle saith: God declared his love to us, that when we were yet his enemies, he sent Christ to die for us, that whosoever believeth in him, should not any longer lie under God's wrath and perish, but have everlasting life; he being given us of his father to be our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, 1. Cor. 1:30. Now if by him alone God hath brought this most sovereign remedy to mankind, against the intolerable woe, which by sin is come into the world, and is (as hath been said) gone over all men, the popish practicers may blush and be ashamed, who part stakes betwixt him and creatures, and so ascribe not the whole work of our salvation to Christ alone.

The third thing, namely how this divine mystery and secret is brought to light, is (in the peaceable and flourishing estate of Christ's Church) the glorious Gospel: which because it containeth the most worthy and acceptable message of man's full redemption by Jesus Christ, is called of S. Paul, the power of salvation to all that believe. The use of the which Gospel is, to manifest that righteousness in Christ, whereby the whole law is fully satisfied and salvation attained. The which being soundly and plainly published and preached by the faithful ministers and messengers of God, and namely this part of it, that mankind is fully redeemed by the blood of Christ Jesus, the only begotten son of God, manifest in the flesh, doth bring great and exceeding joy: and is embraced of them which know the value and price of it, with all possible welcoming of it. And this, though more darkly, as the times were, the Lord caused to be taught under the law in types and shadows, prefiguring Christ to come and to be exhibited; even as he saith in John. 5:46. Moses wrote of me: though indeed now under the Gospel far more clearly and plainly, that it may now be verified, if ever, that Christ by preaching him, hath been crucified in our eyes. So that by this, is this mystery of salvation (purchased by his death) manifested unto us.

Now the fourth point remains, how this tidings of Christ's delivering man from the fear of the wrath to come, is received in the world: and that is by faith. For there is no way to receive Christ and all his merits (the full medicine of man's misery) but by faith. This true faith therefore is to be known, what it is, and how it is wrought: that so by it he may receive Christ and be saved. Now this true faith, which for the worthy effect of it, we call justifying faith, is nothing else but a sound belief in that promise of life, that poor sinners coming unto Christ, he will ease them, that is, free them from all woe, and restore them to all happiness here and forever: and to be short, so to give credit to God's word, as he rest thereon that he will save him. Which

true faith is wrought in him by the ministry of the word, revealing this mercy and truth of God: and by these, the holy Ghost enlightening him to conceive, and drawing him to believe, and so uniting him to Christ: which whosoever hath thus received, is hereby made the child of God (so as he himself shall see it) and an inheritor by sure hope of eternal life. This therefore is to be known of him who shall be saved, and his judgment is to be settled in this truth, before he enjoy it as his own, or can have his part in it. He must be able to see clearly and soundly that God hath made this Christ Jesus his son Lord over all creatures, conqueror of the devils, deliverer of the captives, and comforter of the heavy hearts: so that by him there is as full pardon of sin purchased, as ever was by Adam procured guiltiness and condemnation. And thus much of these two first points, that he whom God will effectually call to the assurance of salvation, must have knowledge in general of man's misery and God's mercy by Christ's redemption.

## **CHAP. 4.**

How this knowledge worketh, and namely, the first work that God maketh them believe their misery, and to be troubled in mind for it.

There is yet wanting the true embracing and applying of Christ, with all the merits of his death and passion, to this man that hath the foresaid knowledge, or else he can in no wise be happy. Let us see therefore how this knowledge worketh in him, on whom God will show mercy, how God by the light and help of it draweth him forward, until he believe for his own part, and in his own person, which the other, who have only the general knowledge before mentioned, never attained to. And this is the last of the three points, which I purposed to handle about this matter, namely in showing

who is the child of God. Which being done, the question in hand shall appear and be manifest. This only by the way it shall be fit to admonish the reader of (as I said before) that he is in no way to the kingdom of heaven, who is yet void of this knowledge altogether, of his misery (I mean) and of the remedy: which kind of people, although they are least troubled in their consciences of all other men, but are merry, as though no danger were coming toward them (and therefore keep a course in their lives which is after the fashion of the world) are to be pitied and prayed for, and to be persuaded to hear the word preached, rather than to be allowed in their madness and folly. Who verify most rightly the saying of the Wiseman: That there is a way that seemeth pleasant to them, but the issues thereof are the way of death. God suffering them (as he did the Gentiles) to walk in their own ways.

But to leave them as sufficiently convinced of a woeful estate, even by the testimony of men, who have any judgment, and to go forward with that which is in hand, that is, to show how this doctrine worketh in him, who by it shall come to true faith and assured hope of salvation, we are to know, that he remaineth not an idle and unprofitable hearer, as sometime, and as many other still do, but is secretly drawn, he cannot tell how, by the unspeakable work of the spirit of God to be persuaded, that the doctrine taught doth concern him; the Lord giving him with his knowledge, wisdom, which is a gift of the spirit, whereby he applleth general things particularly to himself: and that he thereby speaketh unto him, as well as he doth to any other, in the denouncing the threats of the law, and everlasting damnation: and (his eyes being now opened to believe this) he thinketh himself the miserablest of all other, who before nothing at all regarded the welfare of his soul, but thought himself in as good case to Godward, as any other. He now perceiveth (I say) himself not only a loathsome creature in God's sight, through the leprosy of sin,

but withal a most cursed and damned creature, subject to all God's plagues in this world, and to condemnation in the world to come. For although the world lie in darkness, and believeth not the law of God, least it should be convicted by it (and therefore cannot believe the promises of the Gospel) yet God otherwise provideth for his, that they by seeing and feeling the desert of their sins, may have an appetite thereby to seek mercy and forgiveness, which without it is unsavory to them: as our Savior Christ saith, The whole have no need of the Physician, but the sick, Matth. 9:12. Neither let this deep impression of the doctrine of the law preached (being no less sensible to the party that feels it, then the print of the seal is to our eye in the soft wax:) let it not (I say) be counted a mean and common mercy: In deed it is meanly accounted of, the doctrine of it being so common and oft taught. For as it is said of faith, Luk. 18:8, that when the Son of man cometh, he shall find it rare in the world: so in some sort we may say of this, that it is rare, that men, who know that all are under the wrath of God, till the Son of God make them free, do believe indeed that it is so with them, and even their own case.

Oh, men shun this as death (and yet without believing it there is no life) for did they believe it personally for their own parts, they could not but lay it to heart: so as the whole powers thereof should be taken up with the cogitation of it (as it is with us at the sudden hearing of heavy news) yea all the powers of the mind and heart would be affected with it, even as a man is by the sting of an Adder, or when he is pricked with the point of a sword: so (I say) it is with him that doth unfeignedly believe his own misery, without exception casting away all deluding conceits which might hinder it: such a sudden alteration it shall work in him, how far off so ever he was before that from it. And that is lively set forth in the example of the three thousand that were converted at Peters sermon: who for their estate before, had been of them that crucified Christ, and even at that

present time were mockers and railers at the Apostles, saying, they were drunken with new wine: yet when on the sudden the Lord arrested them by his word and challenge, and with his spiritual sword, by Peters skillful handling the same, had wounded and stricken them (so as they could not scape nor resist the power and stroke of it) they were pricked in their hearts, as if an arrow had pierced their liver, crying out immediately, that the pain which they felt within them was intolerable: which they expressed in their words when they made their mone even unto them whom they had so lately railed upon; now speaking with new tongues (which is admirable) Men and brethren, what shall we do? Even thus in some sort doth the Lord work, when he maketh them to give credit to this his thundering voice by his law arrainging men for their sins: which is no less fearful to them then the roaring of a lion, when yet other men, whose sins are as great, and have as good cause to be feared, and to faint under the burden of them, are not a whit moved thereat: not moved, I say, through the commonness of it, anymore then the fowls are afraid of the scar-crow, after they have been long accustomed to it, who in time dare sit upon the head of it, and pluck straws out of the very nose thereof.

And this I do the more stand upon, to make this point clear, because I have observed by long experience, how grossly the people of our age do suffer themselves to be bewitched about this matter. For to bewail them who are soon healed, if they be pricked at all, and them who fall deadly to raging at the Minister, if their hearts be vexed by hearing their danger: I say, to bewail the estate of them, there is yet a third sort (in number an hundred for one of the other) who were never troubled in conscience for their sin, or the woe that it hath purchased them; neither do once dream that such a thing is needful for them: but eat, drink and sleep, some play, and some work; and, as they did in the days of Noah, embrace this present evil world, profane, merry,

yea and light-hearted, when (as S. James saith) they should howl and mourn: and as though they feared no more than they would make men believe they do, are never scared, till the very time and hour of death, or deadly danger. But what do they then? When they have called in lustily, as men at a banquet, I mean, when they have taken their pleasure and lived therein? I say, when they see their reckoning, and day of accounts is near, then what do they? Where is their mirth become? Oh, they die as Nabal, that is, as fools, and are as he was, when he heard he should die, as a stone, and a block: or despair, as Judas did, and some of them die as he died, that is, sooner then they needed (as well as they loved their life.) And the best sort of them are but as they that are spoken of by the Prophet, that is, they have no bands in their death: they die quietly, perhaps with a Lord have mercy on us: but they not regarding blessing in their life, it is now far from them at their death, and therefore dying without repentance, let other be feared by them.

And yet while the world is full of such people (as I have said) behold, as if they yet wanted something to make them miserable, how this unsavory and dangerous speech is spread far and near among such, by many ministers as well as common persons: who cry out, that it is pity that some are suffered to preach the law: and that such urging of men's consciences for their sins, is enough to drive the people to desperation: and such like. When yet S. Paul commands that the word be preached with all authority, which men may not be able to resist, and with convincing of the conscience. And S. Luke in the Acts commends the fruit of that doctrine so highly, even that they were pricked in their hearts for their sins, without which they had neither repented, nor obtained pardon of their sins. Indeed, if any preach the law alone without the glad tidings of the Gospel, or urge repentance without the encouragement of God's mercy through Christ and forgiveness of sins, he were worthy to be sharply reproved, and to be



restrained till he should amend so dangerous an error and so grievous a fault. But if any find fault with the joining of both together, when experience and Scripture do show, that no other kind of preaching can profit and do good in the Church, they are earnestly to be desired, if they do it of ignorance, to be taught; if of a worse mind, to desist from it. But this shall suffice for answer to this speech, rashly and unwisely cast forth to cause many to stumble at. I return to that from which I went aside a little, to persuade those which are teachable, that God doth use to make his law to cast down such as he purposeth to lift up again, as I have said.

The Scripture yieldeth many complaints and crying's out of God's servants, who acknowledged as much: Some when they had once escaped the danger of their former woe; as that of Paul to Timothy doth testify; I was a blasphemmer, a persecutor, and an oppressor: Some in the time of their distress, as by that in Jeremiah; I heard Ephraim complaining thus: Convert me O Lord, or else I cannot be converted: and they in 1 Sam. 12:20, with many other. And God be thanked, although they are but a few of so many thousands as have lived in former ages, yet he hath not left this unwitnessed by many in this our age, of whom some are fallen asleep, and others remain amongst us unto this day, who with bitter complaints, salt tears, and doleful groans, no less sensibly, then Jacob sorrowed when he thought that a wild beast had devoured his son Joseph, Gen. 37:34, have confessed the depth of their woe, sighing and seeking, if by any means they might find ease and deliverance: although the most are hardened, and can be brought to no such abasement.

And if that which I have said before to this purpose persuade not men to think so: but this which I say is the less believed and regarded, seeing many, and those as great sinners as most others, are as merry, or at least as far from any wound or sting of conscience as

any, which a man would think were not like to be, if they were in such depth of misery: Let them know, they have little to take comfort in that; for (as I have said) this is so with some, because they neither know nor believe this, but they lie in ignorance and unbelief, and therefore neither suspect, nor fear any such thing, and so it is with all the world until they have knowledge by the law: and Paul showeth that it was so with him, till the law revealed it to him, for so he saith Rom. 7:8. I once was alive before the Law, that is, I thought myself in most perfect safety: even through this ignorance I say, and unbelief it is, that this which I have said lieth as dead, and not a man of a thousand dreameth of, or is feared with any such matter. And this is furthered by the unskillfulness and carelessness of the Ministers, who as the Lord's watchmen should awake their people out of their deep and deadly sleep, when they yet have oftentimes healed the hurt of the daughter of God's people with sweet words, saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace, Jerem. 6:14. For with such as by the love and labor of their faithful teachers have been wisely plied and followed, it may be seen to be otherwise; and there ye may find many (though all take not good thereby) which have knowledge of and believe these things, which bewrayeth the blindness and bondage of the rest, almost the whole world, who would laugh out, and mock at this doctrine, and make all believe that there is no such matter. But I have been long in this; I will now proceed to the next point, and show further how God worketh in him, whom he will save, when he hath brought him thus far.

The Second work: he consulteth in this case what to do.

After that he seeth by the doctrine which he hath heard, how the case standeth with him, namely that he is guilty before God of eternal punishment and wrath, and seeth not how to escape the same hanging over him; the Lord directeth him and guideth his heart to

enter into further consideration with himself of and about his present estate, and consulteth what to do in that his extremity. Neither doth he this lightly or hoverly (as many) after he hath heard the necessity of that duty taught him, and the same earnestly urged unto him: but mindeth it seriously, and goeth about it as a matter of life and death.

That God thus moveth him to deliberate in so weighty and doubtful a case, no man need to call it into question, when nothing is well done without it, in earthly matters of any moment, where the wit of man is the chief or only agent and dealer. For we know that rashness doth nothing well: how much more then may we think, that God will not suffer him, whom he meaneth to bring to so great honor as the assured hope of salvation is, to go about it without due regard and consideration? Especially, he dealing by ordinary means, where they may be had and come by? But that he entereth into consultation what to do, it is evident by that the Prophet Jeremiah saith with a vehement complaint, when the people were called to repentance, and the Prophet waited to see what fruit should follow, that there was none that said, What have I done? That is, none entered into consultation about the matter. Therefore it is said, that the prodigal son, who resembleth most rightly the sinner, and in his returning home to his father resembleth the penitent sinner in turning to God: that he did before that, come to himself, and say, How many hired servants in my fathers house have bread enough, and I die for hunger? Which, what other thing was it, then to consider and deliberate what he were best to do? And the Steward questioning with himself what to do, when he was warned to give an account of his stewardship, doth plainly teach this. Besides all that hath been said, if the godly who had fallen, could not repent before they remembered and considered their fall, and from whom they were fallen, as we read of the Church of Ephesus, and Peter before he wept

bitterly remembered the words of Jesus, and how he had transgressed against them: Upon all these considerations, let us not doubt, but that God draweth his, to consult about their estate what they should do, being in anguish and distress of mind. And that they may look for little good to come of their casting down, and sorrow, which by the law is conceived in them, if they do not in the most serious manner, as they be able, and as the case requireth, think and deliberate about it. And therefore they whom God watcheth over, if they be not able to counsel themselves, yet the Lord guides them to ask counsel of others, as the forementioned example in the Acts, and of the woman of Samaria doth teach: And in what manner he doth this, and what thoughts he hath about the same, is not hard to conjecture; but even as other in the same estate, mentioned in the Scripture do testify: namely what he is to do, and whether there be any hope, how he was bewitched to come to that estate; what he hath lost, and deprived himself of, in this his estrangement from God, by following and seeking his own will, and foolish liberty: he seeth an end is come of the cursed race which he hath run, and that little time which he hath yet remaining, will also full soon be gone: His delights, jests, merry conceits, dreams, and vain hope that he had of long life, of promotion, increase of riches, of good cheer with his companions, or such like, alas they are gone! He is ashamed to think what deceivable pleasures they were. And as for safety and sound peace, he seeth how far off from them he is. He seeth that his former life will be called to an account, and is already. And although he thinketh of delays, excuses, or other vain shifts and deceiving of himself: yet he seeth that these cannot put away the deadly remembrance of his woeful estate, especially when he considereth, that God will not be mocked, nor his word be frustrate, which hath bewrayed his misery.

He will therefore consult no longer with flesh and blood, as he hath done, but putteth away all fleshly and carnal shifts and holds; and by

God's gracious direction taketh counsel by the knowledge that he hath; and considereth that no man can come to Christ, if the heavenly father draw him not by his spirit: And therefore although the sorrow of hypocrites vanisheth away, and cometh to nothing, yet by God's gracious working in him, it becometh an occasion of humbling and breaking of heart unto him, and of much other good, as hereafter we shall see. Also he considereth that God is slow to anger, and ready to forgive sinners, being gracious and full of mercy: And though that thought be repelled through the remembrance of the greatness of his sin, and unacquaintedness with the promise; yet there is no doubt, but that he is secretly upholden by it from dreadful despair. Thus while present comfort faileth he sorroweth still, and the more deeply, for that he thinketh verily that he hath no part in it: and therefore being cut off that way for the time, he cannot but return to think of his desolation and woeful condition, which breedeth deep sighs and sorrows afresh: And he breaking forth, as one full, which can hold no longer, it wrings out such strong cries, Oh miserable man that I am! What shall I do? How shall I escape this fearful vengeance? In this heaviness, he accuseth himself, and complaineth: but to avoid that misery, he seeth it impossible; and to go under it still, he feels it intolerable. And although he knoweth that there is a remedy, and what it is (which yet many in such heaviness and abasement do dimly and weakly know, and therefore their sorrow is the more) yet can he not apply it to himself by any means. In this extremity therefore of his, and being in this straight and distress, he crieth out with Paul: O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me? And therefore the Lord guideth him to some instructor, as he did Paul to Ananias, Act. 9:17, or stayeth him by the public ministry, or by his own knowledge bringeth him, as we read of the prodigal child, Luk. 15:17, to counsel himself by that which he hath heard.

The Third work: they are broken hearted and humbled.

The former consultation by God's working, bringeth this resolution to him, that he will no more look back to his old Sodom, what hard conditions soever he go under, and so he falleth to relenting, his heart is broken, and he humbled and abased, and in this spirit of meekness saith, as Paul did after he was cast down, Act. 9:6. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And now he seeth that the Lord hath him at advantage (as a man bound in chains) ready and attendant to whatsoever it pleaseth him, who before, for his stiff-necked stubbornness was neither to be entreated, commanded, nor feared. This unfeigned humbling of himself before God, for all his wants, breaches, and wounds in conscience, is a beginning of all goodness and grace, which man feeleth in himself, and casteth off pride, and the strength of a high mind: and what knowledge of religion, or any other good gifts soever a man hath without humility, he is but unreformed and unmortified. A happy discipline and nurture to be wondered at, that can so soon and suddenly break the clods of so hard a heart, and so easily wind him as a twig or wand, whether it listeth him, who could not before, anymore then the great tree in the least manner, be bowed.

Thus must the Lord work and show his wisdom and power upon this unframed and crooked person, before he can be made right and straight. But what then (perhaps you will say) and what is this man the nearer to God's kingdom, and the sight and knowledge of his redemption, out of his forementioned misery? I answer, Very much every manner of way. For being thus humbled, he is now easily to be persuaded: and being by the same spirit of God enlightened, whereby he was cast down with heaviness and fear before, he is fit to think of, and to remember the sweet promises of God, which before though he had heard, yet saw that he had nothing to do with them, and

therefore durst not hearken after them: Now he can think of that, which by preaching he sometime heard, as one who may be in hope to be the better for it, that God is of that nature, that he may be entreated, and reconciled to him.

The Fourth work: a secret desire of forgiveness.

And by such considerations he raiseth up himself, and the Lord kindleth in him an especial desire of the forgiveness of sins, and of the favor of God, which cannot be right and well ordered, if it did not proceed from some hope that God will be entreated of him.

Here therefore he setteth before his eyes, more clearly than he could before, the nature of God, how loving and kind he is: how ready to pardon: and how great sinners (who might more easily be dismayed then he) have found favor with him. It is also (by God's good directing of him) much to the helping forward of him, that he remembereth none are exempted from this benefit, but such as exempt themselves: And that the bruised reed especially, shall not be broken, nor the contrite heart despised, but the heavy laden coming to him shall be eased, and they who mourn shall be comforted, being blessed already.

And although through ignorance, and ill building up, many are far from those thoughts and affections a long time (the devil working upon their weakness) and God so disposeth it also, that even some such as have the best means and helps to set them forward, may feel and see their own weakness for a time; yet doth he work those things in them at one time or other, if he purpose to save them: and this fervent desire (I mean) though in some with more timorousness, and this hungering after mercy which God stirreth up in him, and this earnest longing after a remedy by Christ, is such and so fervent in him, that as a man appointed to death setteth not by all the pleasures

and gain in the world, in comparison of a pardon, without which he cannot have joy in anything: So this poor sinner feeling the terror of God's curse, and knowing that there is no release for him, but only in Christ, (whom if he have, he shall be saved; and if he have not, he shall perish everlastingly) doth above all things in the world sigh after him, longing to be made partaker of him.

In this hunger therefore and thirst of his, after pardon, how welcome think we shall good tidings be now unto him? Such a man so low brought, and so abased in his own eyes, and so far from all hope of worldly remedy either in himself or in other; if he might be stayed with any word of comfort at that time, how acceptable were it like to be unto him? Much more welcome doubtless then all the promises of the Gospel have ever been to him before, or then all things in the world be now to him besides. Then if he might have the coarsest diet, it would be sweet and most savory, to whom a honey comb before, was not pleasant: nay, crumbs under the table are comfortable refreshing's to him; who before, was glutted with the children's dainties. Oh, how glad such a one would be, if he might be received of his heavenly father to be but as a hired servant, who could not before be brought to like of the place of a son? But he that could bring him tidings of righteousness, that is, a messenger sent of God to tell him that God will be merciful to his offenses, and think upon his sins no more, this should be unto him an odd man, and one of a thousand. Then to hear that Jesus Christ hath vanquished sin, death and the devil, who had power over him, and brought to light immortality and life to him, and hath given him perfect righteousness to cover his shame, and to make him comely and well favored in the sight of God, and that hereby he is fully reconciled to him again: all the former disgrace, anguish of mind, and deadly thralldom abandoned, what think we can be more welcome?



Is it to be thought, that a man being in this case before mentioned, filled with misery from top to the toe, not knowing where to hide himself, not seeing how to go under the burden of his grief, would make no reckoning of this message? As if a man thirsting almost to death should refuse to drink; or one at the place of execution should reject his pardon. Among other thoughts, this is not the least profitable which God enableth him to fasten upon, that laying (as it were) his estate in a pair of balance, he seeth that there is no hope of mercy, but certain condemnation by lying still in the estate, wherein he hath lived; and that he cannot appear before God's judgment seat in it: now on the other side, he considering that God calling sinners to repentance, and giving his son to redeem even great offenders, that it may be (as the King of Nineveh said) he will have mercy upon him; so that there is some hope by suing and seeking in humility and remorse unto God: thus the Lord still bringeth him on. And whereas some other in this case hasteth out of his sorrow, if by any means he may either break through it, before it hath humbled him, or wrought any such effect, as to long after a remedy and deliverance, or else overcome of it: yet the soul of the poor sinner whom God meaneth to save, being meekened and humbled, waiteth till God doth further stay and uphold it, with continued sighs and desires, that the bright beams of his favor through Christ might shine upon him, he desiring above all things to be unburdened of this woe, and pardon of his sins, and yet hath no power perhaps to pray for that which his soul most fervently desireth. After this and such like manner (as hath been said) is his consultation and resolution: and this is his mind, and thus he deliberateth and casteth with himself: for though he in this case is not able to express his meaning, yet if he could utter that which he conceiveth, he would say, that these are his very thoughts and considerations with himself. In which estate of his, although I affirm not that he is able to apply the remedy to himself, yet this general hope which he hath found by the promises, that God is kind

and merciful to broken hearted sinners, doth cause him to stay himself, that he may perhaps be so to him: and resolveth unfeignedly and with full purpose, to go forward in seeking forgiveness of his sins at God's hands, this way he will take, if he perisheth he perisheth: yet some hope he hath; he resolving with himself that he will never walk in his former deadly estate, but that he will confess and lay forth his long continued wickedness, unto the Lord, though it be against himself: neither will he spare himself, wherein he hath most pleased his own heart: for why? He seeth what and how vain the desires of it be: and therefore is resolute never to turn to them anymore: yet (he being well instructed) maketh not this purpose of forsaking sin any means of his justification, but in detestation of his former wickedness is moved and drawn by God so to do. This resolving therefore, is one step or degree by which he passeth unto the fuller certainty of that happiness which he seeketh: and he hath received a great measure of grace and favor, when he hath attained to it: therefore Satan who knoweth this, holdeth men by many strong cords from it, that although they be long about it, yet as faint chapmen who are bidding still, for the ware which they would have, but yet buy it not: even so do they. For when they have been well counseled to make haste in seeking the Lord, as that which is best of all for them, yet profit or pleasure, friendship or fear holdeth them back: who although in their heat and haste, being sore driven by sickness, tempests, fear of death, or the like occasions, they do rashly purpose and protest, that they will never be the men, which they have been; yet do but how for a day (as it were) like the bulrush, with the wind: and therefore they are far from the truth of it: But he of whom I here speak, who hath so nearly and deeply looked into his estate (which the other have not done) he (I say) cannot be drawn back, to his former looseness and licentiousness, nor holden and kept in it any longer by any torture, because he well knoweth that none is like terrible to it.

Now if it be asked, what he is the better for his resolving: to the end it may more clearly appear, I answer, that when this is wrought in him, his heart is mollified, humbled and softened, as Paul's was; who after he saw that God set himself against his going to Damascus to persecute his Saints, and threw him down on the ground, said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And when he is brought to this point, his heart is both full of relenting, and sorrow for displeasing God, though not in such sort as afterward it shall be, (which from another not having thus resolved, is far off) and is now a heart of flesh, not of stone, in which, the saving grace of God being offered, may be planted and received. And all this is wrought in him by the marvelous and secret operation of God's holy spirit; who as he beginneth, and finisheth the whole work of his receiving Christ; so doth he the middle part of the same: for it is not in any other, thus to bow and bend man's heart. Neither doth God's spirit that only, as with a hammer breaking and brusing the clods of it, but also doth lead him further.

The Fifth work: they confess and ask pardon.

For with these holy affections in this poor sinner, there is wrought an encouragement and some more bold access to God by the same spirit, to confess his sins to God, even as particularly as he can, especially those in which he hath taken most pleasure, and which have most prevailed in him: and to say with the prodigal child, I will go unto my father, and confess, father, I have sinned against heaven and thee, &c. how much soever it goeth against him: and as he confesseth his sin, so he poureth out earnest prayers to him for the pardon of then, through the mediation of Christ. All which, howsoever they seem to him to be no great matters (who is not as yet a competent and sufficient judge in this case) yet the Scripture commendeth them to be great, even the fruit of some little and weak

faith, and him, who obtaineth them, to be in especial favor with God: as in the forenamed parable is most lively to be seen: where the father (resembling God) is said to have met his lost son before he came at him, and to have embraced and kissed him, after that he was resolved in himself to go and seek to him for favor and pardon, and to acknowledge his faults unto him, &c. Now was there anything (think we) in the natural father, which is not much more in the father of mercy? Who exceedeth all the fathers of the earth in kindness and compassion. Thus the Lord by his holy spirit worketh in the hearts of his children, and with all these forementioned graces, which he giveth them, he draweth them to prize and value this benefit of redemption so highly, as the wise Merchant doth the field, wherein the pearl is hidden, selling all to buy it: so do they (I say) set light by all things, in comparison of this, and are carried with this mind, that they will forsake whatsoever may hinder, for the obtaining of it.

The Sixth work: they forsake all for it, and highly prize it.

But what then? (Some perhaps will say) do you affirm that these things can do a man any good without faith? (For of this nothing hath yet been said) and do you affirm a man to be justified (for such an one is he who is in favor with God) having no faith? Or that anything is accepted of God which he doth (as his desire to be forgiven, his hungering after it, his humiliation, access to God in prayer and confession of sins) all these being without faith? Or if not so, do ye then say that we ourselves must thus prepare ourselves to receive faith? But that is to attribute free will unto man being yet in the estate of misery and bondage, and unrenewed, as being yet without faith. To the first I say, that although none of these be faith, yet I say, that they are not without it, as I will more fully show afterward: neither that God is pleased with any man, neither he himself is justified, but only by it: but we cannot discern or set down

the very moment when faith is wrought: but when the other forenamed graces of God are effectually wrought in the heart, then is this of faith wrought also by the same spirit: neither can he that hath received this faith into his heart, so certainly and easily judge of it, as of those other gifts which accompany it. To the latter objection, I answer, that I am far from ascribing to man unrenewed, any inherent goodness, whereby he may prepare himself to receive faith: he is, I say, destitute of all goodness in his will, and of power to do good: such graces are given him of God, as was said before. For God findeth all men in their filthiness and gore blood, as the Prophet Ezekiel speaketh: and she whom he vouchsafeth to make his beloved spouse (I mean his Church) he raiseth out of the dust, washeth and cleanseth her from her filthiness wherein he found her, and then taketh her to him to delight in, as his dear and only spouse. It is the Lord therefore which is the author, and finisher of his faith who shall be saved: and he, as he hath abased him, and filled his heart with sorrows for the same purpose; so it is he that soketh it by little and little, and seasoneth it in time with faith, hope, and comfort: This is his only work. And although it be hard to determine when faith is wrought (as I have said) and how long dreadful fear continueth: yet by means of the knowledge of his misery, and redemption, God worketh them both in his heart, and that when, and in what manner it seemeth best to his wisdom; so that it may be seen that it is so. And thus I having answered these two objections, I will now proceed, more fully to show how he guideth and bringeth home this lost sheep, as I had in some sort proceeded to do, before I was occasioned to digress a while, by reason of the two former questions now answered.

To proceed therefore with this person whom the Lord will save, when he hath wrought thus far in him earnestly to desire the remedy against his misery, he leaveth him not there, as many through

ignorance and want of wise building up, are held longer at this stay: and although not lying in utter unbelief, yet not bold to apply God's promise to their souls; even as there are many, who have had compunction of heart, that never go further; but waveringly are off and on; and when the desire is not accomplished, the heart fainteth, and they for all their desire, seeing it vanisheth away, and is not constant, fall away altogether. But God goeth further with this person, as I have said.

For he having now with the skillful merchant weighed the price of this pearl, namely, to have Christ to become his, hath it in such estimation, that he counteth meanly of all things, in comparison of this: and in good advisedness selleth all that he hath, to buy it. But what hath he (you will ask) of his own, to purchase or come into the possession of it? As for his goods and riches, whatsoever he enjoyeth, they are not his own, but anothers, and borrowed: (yet many thousand poor souls which shall be saved, have little or no wealth at all) but this precious pearl is not bought with money. What hath he then (ye say) to procure it? Verily, he hath nothing, but an interest and hold in sinful pleasures, and worldly lusts. But alas (some man will say) what do ye naming of them, as things anything worth? But I say again, I must mention that which he hath of his own: and that is his sin: which though every reasonable man will say, that it is not worth the mentioning, yet it was sometime, more precious to him then silver, and in account above the purest gold: and therefore to renounce it, is no easy nor small matter. And yet (so well it falleth out for him) there is no other thing required of him, to the attaining of the forementioned pearl, then the casting away and the forsaking of that his sin. For so the Lord plainly testifieth: he that denieth himself, he shall be my disciple: and whosoever forsaketh anything (that is, which God condemne) he shall have a hundredth fold

more then he forgoeth, (so bountiful a rewarder is the Lord of all that seek him) and afterward, eternal life.

Therefore, when this silly sinner understandeth, and giveth credit unto it: as dear and pleasant as his sins were unto him, that he could neither by fear nor shame, neither by allurements or persuasions before that, be brought to abandon and wax weary of them; yet now, he disclaimeth and crieth out of them, and in an utter detestation of them, saith: as Ephraim said of Idols (in which she had so much delighted) What have I to do with them? A thing all may see to be very admirable. A man to forgo that, which he loved best of all, yea better then life it self, (for how many lose their lives for their sinful pleasures?) yea and that willingly and readily, only for the hope of that, which as yet he hath not, is it not admirable? And must not that hope (think we) be sure and certain, though in him so weak as yet, that they cannot profess it? Thus doth the Lord work in the heart of him, who shall embrace Christ for his Savior, that nothing shall separate betwixt them. It may well be said, No man cometh to him, except the father draw him by his spirit: for otherwise, we read, that it is as hard for a wicked man to become good, as for the black More to change his skin, or the leopard his spots.

And whereas it may be said, there are many, when they are pricked in conscience for their sins, who do thus cry out of them, for the time; but it appeareth afterwards to have been but a blast, and as it may seem, a sudden passion, which vanisheth away, and cometh to nothing: I affirm the same, and grant it to be so: but this is a far other thing, and this work of grace to forsake all, for the hope of mercy and forgiveness of sin, differeth as much from that rash and sudden crack of fearful crying out of sin while only terror oppresseth; as cannon shot differeth from the shot of paper: the one casting out the devil for bearing anymore dominion in him, the other seeming to

fray him with bold and loud words (I defy the devil, &c.) but driving him away in deed, no otherwise then the popish holy-water: as may be seen in comparing both sorts together. For example: though Ahab gave signs that he forsook his sins, by rending his clothes, (but not his heart) putting sackcloth upon him, and fasting; yet he showed by and by after, that all was but a ceremony, by willful resisting and disobeying the message of God by the prophet, and boldly affirming, that he hated him: Yet on the other side, Zacchaeus did far otherwise: for how he received Christ's doctrine, he declareth by the fruits following: revenging himself for his ill-gotten goods with a restoring fourfold, and giving half the rest to the poor: and Christ also testified of his forsaking and leaving his gainful unlawful trade, by open affirming him to be the son of Abraham. An other example: the people, whom Samuel persuaded to forsake their sin, for the hope of the promise, did not only lament after God, but they did in deed forsake it: they did cast away Baalim and Ashtaroth, idols, which they so delighted in: declaring thereby, that they found by the prophets ministry, a far greater treasure: that is, the mercy of God in forgiving them their sins: according to that, which is written since; but true before, even since the first man's repentance: He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin, shall find mercy. But their fathers, who made as great profession and show as they, returning to God and seeking him early: yet they did but flatter him with their mouth, and dissemble with their tongue, for they were not faithful in his covenant.

But these shall suffice: like unto the which, there are many more: Let it be granted therefore, that this is a mighty and admirable work of God's spirit, which thus persuadeth this silly soul, which is travailing hard to find peace and rest unto his heart, thus (I say) to bid farewell to his sweetest delights for the hope of the gain that is set before him: For these two go together: highly to esteem and prize the promise of



life and happiness: and for the same, to despise and set light by the things which were best beloved. And yet this, as impossible as it is to any other, in those whom God chooseth out of the world, he worketh it as sensibly, as we may discern the wild beast to be tamed; and the clear and sunshine day to be overcast and darkened. For God kindleth a fervent desire and longing after that glad tidings (namely that he will freely bestow it upon him that thirsteth after it) till he hold and enjoy it, as his own. And that which S. Paul saith of himself, that when he began to see the beauty of this blessed message, he counted those things loss, which had been vantage to him, yea very dung for Christ's sake, that he might win him: the same is verified in all such as I now speak of, even whosoever he be: and then he is truly come home, no more to be cast off or forsaken of the Lord. And this gracious affection is thus riveted into him, and as it were written with an adamant pen, never to be raised out anymore, to the end it may always after remain and be found in him after experience: as it standeth with great reason it should: even as it was with Moses, when he was of a ripe age, full forty years old, he did show the fruit of it, as many other ways, so this one: that he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. And when this work is wrought in him, that he forsaketh all things for this which he seeketh, and so highly prizeth it, then he is fit to apply it: as followeth: which is the last work.

The Seventh work: they apply Christ and his promise.

For by the doctrine of y e promises, which he heareth, or hath heard published and preached unto him, he draweth his heart to apply then to himself, and to fasten upon them as his own, even as if they had been properly made to him: he persuadeth him by that which he heareth, no longer to fear God as a terrible Judge, and so slavishly to abide in his former bondage, as one in danger of damnation still, and

under the curse; but sealeth up his salvation in his heart, and maketh it as effectually his, as any bargain is made sure to us, when he, who sold it, hath sealed it unto us, or given earnest thereof. And therefore it is that the Scripture doth so often use this phrase of speech, We are sealed up by the spirit of promise, and by the spirit of our God: to give us to understand, that as nothing is with greater security assured unto us then a writing sealed; so there can be no surer way for a man to hold this redemption and salvation, then by having it sealed unto him by the spirit of God: who only knowing the mind of the father and of the son, doth make the same known unto his mind, and bear witness to his spirit that he is the Lord's: and teacheth him thus to reason. If God will forgive him, who hath received grace to seek without fainting and weariness, who longeth for it in a melting heart for offending him, who desireth it more than all earthly pleasure and profit, and is willing to cast away all impediments that may hinder it: if he will forgive such, and he hath framed me to be such a one; then (doubtless) he will be merciful and forgive me.

Thus God maketh him (of whom I speak) to see clearly that he is his, no more to be separated from him, when he hath opened his heart, as he did the heart of Lydia, and causeth him to believe that the son of God who was given to the unworthy world, is given to him, being one of the same. For if earthly fathers be kind to their children crying to them, how much more the father of fathers? For we must think that this afflicted person now mentioned, doth often and deeply weigh the truth, unchangeableness, and perpetuity of the precious promises which he heareth preached unto him; yea and that with more delight, then he doth anything else; he weigheth what may be like to hinder and hold him from having his part in them: and when he considereth that God, who willeth him not to fear, is greater than all that letteth him; what he may, he removeth it, though never so precious to him; and considereth what doth give him greatest

encouragement, and so embraceth the same: we must think when he once conceiveth the incomprehensible excellency of eternal life, and how it maketh the soul always cheereful even here: we must think (I say) that he weighing what his misery is without it, counteth it the most sovereign medicine to heal his sore: and therefore he is ready to use any means, and bestow any diligence to come into the possession of it, and to make it his own, especially when he seeth that it is so freely and mercifully offered.

Thus setting his heart upon it, as that which he seeth would make him more happy, then all the world; though for a time he hath not been able to attain unto the assurance of it (the devil holding him back by many lets and subtleties, abusing his error, weakness, and simplicity thereto) yet the Lord suffereth him not to give over, till he hath waded thorough and overcome all hindrances. And if this be too hard to do by himself, he seeketh the help of others, wheresoever they may be come by, men of deeper insight, and greater judgment and experience in and about the will and purpose of God, concerning salvation, by whose loving travail, counsel and labor he groweth more expert and resolute, and so setteth his heart in believing, as he seeth he hath good cause, and strong encouragement, to his full quiet and contentation: The Lord himself speaking thus: If any thirst, let him come to me, and I will give him the water of life to drink. So that as Jacob's heart failed when he believed not his sons report that Joseph was alive, and the chief governor under Pharaoh; yet when they told him the words of Joseph, and showed him the Chariots which he had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob revived, and he said, I have enough, &c. Joseph my son is yet alive. So though the goodness of the message shall be so far beyond the expectation of him to whom it is brought (as fearing the clean contrary) yet when he shall weigh and consider advisedly the truth of the matter, and certainty of the promises, and therein behold the depth of love which

is in God, and that to the broken hearted, though unworthy, it quickeneth the soul, and refresheth it above all that can be expressed: And so he beholding his estate without these promises, and what need he hath of them, and who it is that offereth them, even he who cannot be gainsaid, that is, the Almighty, he embraceth them, and by little and little, as he gathereth more strength by the infallibleness of them; so he believeth them, and taketh exceeding comfort by them, giveth God thanks, and (as he hath good cause) he cannot satisfy himself therewith, nor (as he thinketh) have enough of them.

And thus doth his soul stay up itself: for seeing God doth give it freely to him, and he desireth it above all other things, as seeing that he cannot be safe without it, who is he which shall hinder it? Thus are all tears wiped away, the rags are cast off, the robes are put on: the spouse is betrothed to Christ her husband, and she by faith made partaker of all the good things which he bringeth with him: who is given unto his Church, not poorly nor bare; but to be her wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. And he that hath thus put on the Lord Jesus, God will know him for his, wheresoever he findeth him, neither shall any take him out of his hands, so saith our Savior himself: My sheep (whom in the verse before he calleth those which believe in him) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands: for my father which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to take them out of my fathers hand. Like unto these are they all, who shall glorify God in this life, separated from the world, though annoyed by the people of it, as the silly sheep are by the goats: whose conversation what it is, another place shall declare, and lay forth hereafter. And this is faith, which making them inwardly persuaded in some sort by so clear evidence, (as I have said) causeth them

outwardly in time to profess the same more boldly, and without fear, as occasion shall be offered: although it be for y e time, both weak and faint, yet is it sound and sure; and after experience in a godly life (I mean the life that is led by faith) it shall be strengthened, better confirmed, and procure withal, rest to their souls. For where the forementioned graces are, as true contrition, the heart broken with sorrow, and meekened, hungering and pining for mercy and grace, confessing and forsaking the sin, with accusation and deep groans for pardon; there is some true measure of saving faith; for God's graces are not separated: for our Savior pronounceth them blessed which have these graces: but none are blessed without faith: therefore faith is there also; because the spirit of Christ dwelleth in such, and he dwelleth in his by faith, therefore it must needs be in them. Which thing I do the rather stand upon to prove, seeing it is rather tried and discerned by these, then known by itself without other holy affections going with it, and for that many of tender age in Christ, and younglings, cannot be certain and thoroughly persuaded that they have faith, and consequently, that their sins are forgiven them, and yet by infallible signs and tokens we know that it is so. I speak of the least measure of it: for of the stronger faith, the question is easier. And the weakest measure of faith I call that, when a humbled soul longeth, and almost fainteth for God's mercy in Christ; and although he be not assured of it, yet he seeth that it cannot be denied: and therefore waiteth for it, and is stayed from despair. I say he seeth that it cannot be denied, but that God doth grant pardon to him against his sin: because he seeth himself to have obtained many graces and works of the holy Ghost, which cannot be in a reprobate, as was said before; and thereby he is holden from despair and dreadful fear. And yet through weakness and want of experience cannot call God father, though he cannot suffer the contrary thought to have any place in himself: and therefore the thing that he most laboreth to be satisfied in and resolved of, is, that he may have some

clearer light, and lay better hold of it, that Christ hath redeemed him indeed; yet is he as the child first taught to go alone, who at the first is weak in the joints, but in time can run about: so shall it be with the soul which thus longeth and lamenteth after God.

This I have spoken for their sakes who more hardly do lay hold on God's mercy, and do with more difficulty apply the promise to themselves: the which to do with all possible care, and not to be turned aside from examining ourselves soundly and thoroughly by any let, is a grace of the greatest importance. And he is wise indeed, who will not stay before he have it: which wisdom God will teach them whom he loveth: for though many very ignorant and careless hearers do hardly, yea never come to any resolution of faith; yet ordinarily, where people are soundly, clearly and wisely taught, it is otherwise: for (to speak of them, who shall be saved) the word so preached, by little and little soaketh and distilleth into the hearts of many of them. And though they know not when this gracious work of God was wrought, for the most part, as neither can we discern and see the plants and herbs when they shoot out, though in time we see it is so: yet some there are, whom God in special manner doth privilege at one time and in one day to receive that grace, and gift of assurance, which others are long laboring and travailing for, before they attain it: As our Savior Christ pronounceth of Zacchaeus: This day is this man become the son of Abraham, and salvation is come into his house. So Lydia, and they in the Act. 2:37. And this is the faith whether it be weak or strong which uniteth to Christ; and maketh them that have it (which is a mystery and riddle to the world) to have and enjoy their hearts desire; yea and indeed more than they could desire or think, namely, to be truly the children of God, and thereby happy. Even the same faith, for which Christ pronounced Peter blessed: who when he saw him but in base estate the son of man, yet for the words which Christ had spoken, and his miracles,

had believed him to be also the son of God, the anointed of the Lord, and his Savior, he pronounced this of him: Blessed art thou Simon, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven.

This faith though Peter had, and he hath it of whom I speak, even whosoever it be whom the Lord maketh blessed (for both weak and strong are partakers of one and the same precious faith, 2. Pet. 1:1.) yet the common professors and hearers of the Gospel have it not, because they do not look that the Lord should reveal it to them, without which they cannot have it, but take counsel of their own wisdom and reason, which do hinder and hold them back from it. For reason thinketh it an absurd thing, and to be laughed at, that a man simple in the world, and a sinner, especially sore burdened with his misery, and confessing the same, should yet be more happy before God, and in his own knowledge, then all the worlds good can make him: Mans wisdom (I say) can never be persuaded of this; but faith holdeth it for truth, and enjoyeth such an estate with good security. And how God revealeth any such thing unto men (which yet is plainly said he did unto Peter ) they cannot tell nor see: except this be it, when they think and have a good hope that it is so: as though such a thing might be wrought in them, and they not know how, the change which it worketh being so apparent: or that God might reveal this secret mystery of faith to them, and they not aware of it; yea and that (which is more) especial signs accompanying it.

But such men should understand, that as it is the gift of God to believe, and he draweth men hereto by his secret working grace: so yet, he doth it by means outward, even whiles men obey his ordinance in attending upon the preaching of his word, and wait for this work, seeking it and praying for it daily: his ministers so speaking, and the people so reverently hearing, that they may

believe: and if not in the time of hearing, yet after by their own examining of their estate, and comparing it with the doctrine taught, as I have showed before in the person whom the Lord will save. And this thing verily men do not, that is, hear, try their estate by the rule taught them, weigh after examination, and remove lets, until they may see that they have found that which they sought, and that there is no just cause to hinder it. Few will bestow any labor, or beat their brains about any such matter, nor any travail of the mind: for that is unsavory and unwelcome unto them. Therefore it is, that after so long preaching of faith, there is (as our Savior foretold) little faith in the world, few have acquaintance with it, (though they cannot like in any wise to be so thought of) as by this which I have said may appear, and shall better appear (I trust) by that which shall follow.

But before I go any further, I will, for the readers better remembrance, conclude that which I have taken in hand in this third branch of the first part of this book to prove, that is to say: although there be many departing's from the right way leading to eternal life, and many breakings off from it, and though it be easily conceived but of few: yet he whom the Lord will choose and repute for his, shall both see into it, and discern it from all by-paths, and walk in it; and so be partaker of happiness by believing. Whereby also appeareth who is the Lord's, and who it is that in reverent boldness may (though it is at the first hardly obtained) assure himself against all the subtleties of the devil and other cursed spirits, that he shall see the Lord in the land of the living: even he who hath been truly humbled in the sight of his misery, seen Christ Jesus the only deliverer of such, and therefore himself hath, and doth believe in him unfeignedly.

And thus I have showed how both the doctrine of misery and redemption ought to work, which is the third point. But seeing we



are so fearful at the first beginning of our effectual calling, that we dare not rest persuaded that we have any faith: these few marks of it following I have set down in a brief manner, which both accompany the weakest faith: and where they be found, are infallible tokens, that in such a person there is some true measure of justifying faith. That is to say, first, if we strive against doubting, Judge. 6:17. Secondly, if we not feeling faith, complain bitterly of the want of it. Thirdly, if we seek fervently to be settled in believing. Fourthly, if we desire to search out the sin which may possibly hinder us, and to expel it. And someone of these, or other graces like them, shall ever be seen in the believer by such as can judge, though not always perceived of the party himself.

## **CHAP. 5.**

Of the lets of faith, and namely in the behalf of the Minister.

And now that I have showed, how by faith men are made the people of God (and consequently justified thereby) who were before his enemies, and his beloved, which sometimes were not beloved, I would here cease to say anymore of this matter, but that I consider that every truth is not by and by received; and so I fear, I may say of this, especially because it is oft bewailed and complained of in the Scriptures, that few have this faith, and that it is seldom or rarely found in the world: which thing, we who mark the course and practice of the greatest part in the world, do see may well be so: I will therefore here speak to my dear and weak brethren somewhat more at large to satisfy them, and set down the chief lets that hinder faith on the behalf of the Minister. Now seeing that faith so honoreth, enricheth, and beautifieth men, as we have heard, it should (doubtless) be far otherwise with thousands of them which think

they have it (but are deceived) then now it is, if they did enjoy it. Yea, and to come more near to ourselves, for whose cause chiefly I wrote this, the multitudes in our parts of the land which profess that they have it, and by no means can abide the contrary speech to go, or opinion to be conceived of them, should, if they had it indeed, astonish and fear all Epicures, Atheists, and Papists, and other hypocrites, which now differ little from them. They should make the religion (I say) of those which have any (as it is in itself, a lump of lies, and an heap of heresies) to appear so indeed; and the other, who regard none at all, to be abhorred, as they deserve to be: whereas now, they being the fewest which have attained to any true fruit of the Gospel, are gazing stocks, and reproaches to such as have no more than a bare name, or vain opinion thereof, even to many of the professors themselves, as to the rest of them, which are enemies to the truth. According to the complaint which the Prophet Isaiah made in his time, saying: Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are as signs and as wonders in Israel, Isaiah. 8:18. In few words therefore let us see what is the cause why so many, who boldly affirm that they believe, and look verily to be saved by the death of Christ, are yet utterly destitute of the same. It is briefly set down by S. Paul, to be this: If our Gospel be hidden, (as it is hidden to none but to them that are lost) the god of this world hath blinded their minds, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should not shine unto them. He plainly showeth that the fault is in men, that they are content to be blindfolded and holden back, though the devil be the bewitcher of them, and so keepeth them from so great a treasure, as is brought unto them by the Gospel. But as we truly say that man is faulty in this, that he openeth his ears, and giveth credit to Satan's deceitful suggestions: so because God did see what would come to pass thereby, he did therefore set watchmen, who should give his people warning thereof, namely, how Satan holdeth them from believing by some of his subtle trains, to the end they might prevent

them: therefore we must know that this fault, whereby men are letted from believing, is either in him who should bring the tidings, that is, the watchman, who is the Minister; or in them who should receive the same, that is, the people and hearers: for if the lets be not removed in both, faith is rarely, or not at all come by.

It is clear therefore (to begin with the Minister) that if he be one which teacheth not at all, they that depend upon him cannot know what love God beareth to them through Christ, or at least they cannot know it to belong unto them: for as much as faith cometh by hearing of the word of God preached unto them: and as our Savior saith: If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch. Therefore it is too manifest, that in some parishes, not one man knoweth himself to be saved (I say, if he depend upon his Minister) but all such knowledge is a mystery to them. And yet if that were the only let on the Ministers behalf, it were well with many people: but where seldom teaching is, the hearers must needs be ignorant of this matter also: because this heavenly truth, to teach how men may know that they are the elect of God, and without wavering, cannot be sufficiently and clearly enough laid forth by the skillfullest teachers seldom teaching; neither, if it could, were the hearers able to conceive and understand, remember and be familiarly acquainted with it; so as they may be able to try themselves, and to prove their estate to be good; all which yet is meet and necessary. For though I know that the grounds and general truths are few, upon which this matter dependeth: yet the breaking of them small to the people's benefit, requireth labor, and time, plainness, and love: yea, to teach the same thing oft, for their safety; and in a nurse-like or motherly affection to stutter and stammer with them: that is, to apply ourselves unto them, and to give them here a little, and there a little, now a line, and then a line; and yet to count all little enough to make them savor our message: at least, and to be saved by it. Howsoever

many Ministers make their reckoning, that a little may serve, and the people be so blockish (they say that nothing will enter into them) yet the well advised will not refuse to hear and weigh the rule of S. Paul to Timothy, that attendance should be given to teaching, and that they should be ready to do that duty in season and out of season, and to put the people in mind of the same daily ( though they know this thing ) as well as to attend to reading privately, to make them fitter for that duty: Christ hath laid no weightier business upon them, calling it the pawn of their love to him, to whom he hath given this charge, to this end that this may be well and thoroughly done, and the rather seeing the people depend upon them.

They will also consider, that the people have many infirmities, much dullness, slippery memories, and sundry other pullbacks; all which do show the necessity of often teaching. The which being so, I profess with grief, it astonisheth me oft, when I think of the too great slackness, and unwillingness of many who have gifts; that they hearing, and knowing, that he who hath an office, must attend upon it: and again, that woe is pronounced to them who do it not: and that as they love Christ, they should feed his lambs, and his sheep: and also that the flock dependeth upon them: Yet that they can be content to take the commodity, and to refuse the labor, and as some do count it, too base a thing to discharge that duty. But howsoever they can easily shift it off before men, they shall not be able to answer it with peace, to God. But yet where this is remedied, there may be lets enough on the Ministers behalf to hinder the hearers (yea though they should be willing to be taught) from coming by faith. As if he should teach often, and yet do not carefully acquaint himself with the people's weakness, and want in conceiving the doctrine, which is to be delivered unto them; but should speak above their reach, little to their understanding, and conceiving, and consequently little to their edifying. There is nothing more like to

hurt the people, then such a kind of teaching, when they shall have a learned man to preach unto them (whereby they are ready to think their case far more happy then others) and yet they shall not be able thereby to receive light, edification in faith and godliness, and sound comfort: that is not easy and plain to them, which he himself understandeth. Although it were to be wished that some things were not put forth by them to the people, which they themselves have not tried by the Scripture, and clearly seen into of the speakers, before they uttered them. I utter not this to grieve any of my brethren, who desire to do good in the Church of God, having received gifts of God thereunto: but to put all in mind to labor to be understood, as well as to speak the truth. And that some may more especially know, that the neglecting of plain speaking, is a chief cause of little fruit of their labors; it need not be taken heavily: for I know men of singular learning, and gifts, who have already much altered the manner of their teaching, framing themselves to the diligent hearers capacity, and more and more desire to do the same daily, rather than to be commended for learned men, of them which neither conceive nor understand them. Yet my meaning is not to nourish or persuade to rude, absurd, and barbarous teaching, which were more fit to make them which should teach, ridiculous, and the Scriptures themselves without authority or credit, as also to mock the people: but that by their plainness, in the evidence of the spirit, reverence might be procured to their Ministry among the hearers: and that their doctrine might be approved in their consciences, which is approved of the Lord, as being drawn from his word, and easily conveyed to their understandings, that so they may prove that they preach with power and authority, and not as the Scribes.

There is but one thing more, which in my judgment doth hinder profiting on the teachers behalf: and that is, when by Catechizing, the chief grounds of faith be not briefly and clearly taught, in right and

good order, the one depending upon, or following the other, as they ought, by fit coherence and agreeing together, that the people may see the way clearly to salvation: and thereby they may the better make profit of their whole Preaching and Ministry also. As that repentance be not required of the people before faith: that faith be not warranted to be in the people, when they see no need thereof by their sin and misery; because it is clear, that they can find no sweetness in Christ, who feel not their sins bitter and sour. Also that a man be taught, that he no sooner believeth, then he is made a new creature, and so is changed in heart and in life: and that the new borne desire to grow by the sincere milk of the Word. It were a great furtherance to their Ministry, if, where the grounds of Religion be plainly and soundly taught, the Minister did by conference and questioning, in his Catechizing, and by examination at Communions, try how the doctrine is received; seeing for want of this, a better opinion being conceived of many by the teacher, then he knoweth cause why; they are unsound in many necessary things, who yet for their often hearing are thought to be ignorant of no necessary point of knowledge, which the Minister hath often taught. It were much to be wished that the Minister, who is willing to take this pain (for it is tedious and unwelcome to many) might have authority to prove such as hear him, how they profit: as well to build up those which are weak the better, when he seeth wherein their want is greatest; as also to purge out the leaven of Popery, and other errors out of them which are infected therewith. Whereby also this benefit might come, that if any sculking Jesuits or Priests, or other Papists, or heretics, should creep into any of their Parishes and Towns, they might by the diligent care of the Minister well furnished with knowledge and authority, be removed, or reclaimed. And otherwise the people being never proved how they have received the truth, neither by authority enjoined to be subject to trial of their soundness, as well as to resort

to the assembly, do through custom lie hardened in their ignorance and superstition, and still remain willful in their old dregs.

A Minister able, and painful through love, in few necessary points jointly laid together (laboring with the people) to make a sufficient Catechism, might be well assured, that he should call so many to the fellowship of the precious faith, as God had appointed there, unto eternal life: and without this, it is found too true, that much preaching doth the less good, as shall appear better unto such as list to look more deeply into it. And I could with all my heart desire, that they (so many as neglect this worthy work, and necessary duty) might be constrained to attend upon it with all diligence: which being done with a very Christian care had of giving good example, and showing themselves, in all good conversation, lights unto their flocks, and free from reproachful faults, great good must needs ensue. And there should not only be a recovering of the due credit and reverence to the Ministry, which the popish Prelacy and barbarous rudeness, blindness, and shameless life of many under the Gospel hath lost, but also it should bring many home to God, who otherwise must utterly perish: And if with this there were a willing and ready mind in them, to satisfy them privately by conference, who should resort to them upon special need and occasion, to comfort them in their heaviness, and to stir them up to religious and godly communication in their meetings privately, and at their table, by their own examples, rather than to be companions with them in profane, worldly and needless talk, that so they might as well speak good things in private, as teach the truth in public (as Christ did; ) I make no doubt, but that God would plentifully bless their harvest.

## **CHAP. 6.**

## Of the lets that hinder faith on the behalf of the People.

But if the Minister be framed both in life and doctrine, as were to be wished, thus to give warning to the people of Satan's malicious intents, and other impediments; and so seek to win them to the faith: yet are there such swarms of evils in the people, and so many kinds of them, that except, they for their parts be willing to be counseled, and to receive their message and doctrine, they shall find, that through one let or other, few of them shall be partakers of this precious faith which I speak of. To speak more plainly, my meaning is, Satan layeth infinite stumbling blocks in their way: for when God by the Preaching of the Gospel showeth the world how their sins are pardoned, and their deadly woe removed in Christ, they will not mark it, nor take any pains about it, but esteem of it as of a light matter, as though God did seek his own good by making such an offer to them, rather than theirs: and that he must be more beholden to them for hearing the way to salvation preached, then they to him for teaching them; and so count it not thank worthy. Other have weightier matters (as they think) to look after, namely, their pleasures, and their profits; with the beauty and love whereof, the devil dazzleth their eyes, that they see nothing there, that is, in their preaching, which can provoke them to be in love with it: although that which can save them be only there to be had. So by one deceit or other he prevaieth so far with them, that they believe not, no not even they, who hearing, receive the doctrine with liking it, and for that very cause think that they believe.

And what is clearer at this day, then this, that of many thousands which receive the glad tidings of eternal life by our preaching, willingly, or at the least without resisting our doctrine; yet few, yea very few attain to the power of faith, neither declare any work thereof to be in them? For either they feel no need within themselves,



whereby they should be driven to seek help out of themselves, in Christ; or if they do, they by and by, before they sustain any smart, lay their burden upon him: so that he is never sought, nor cared for of them, but when their need pincheth them; and then they believe in him (they say) but be indeed no more stayed and confident by their faith, nor in their lives reformed, then they were before: and so serve him with their tongues, and lips, and follow their own lusts in their hearts; or staggering still betwixt hope and doubt, at a blush rejoicing, and not able to render a reason why; and at another time cast down as far again, in token of no stay nor peace. Now of all these how truly are the Apostles words verified, the Gospel being hidden from them? That is, the promises of it not being believed of them, what other cause is there than this, the devil by one means or other hath so blinded them all, that they believe not: and as for this latter sort, they seeing their misery what it is, and how unavoidable by any way that they can find out, how could they (if they were not enchanted and deprived of their right mind by the devil) be content to go without the remedying thereof, it being so freely and graciously offered them?

The which thing also, is proved further to be true by the practice of true Christians, who having sure hold and taste by faith of Christ's merits, will admit no delusions that deceive the other, whereby they might be deprived of the assurance thereof. But although they have temptations, strong and fierce, as well as the other, yet they so look to the greatness of God's love, and the truth and certainty of his promises, and the benefit which they reap thereby, that although with strong fighting, and loud cries through depth of sorrow, they are in combat with Satan; yet they will not give over, nor yield their right into his hand. But as one in the peril of drowning taketh hold of a naked sword, though it cut him deep, rather than yield his life to the water: so they choose to keep their faith with some great difficulties,

rather than to give over their soul, which is upholden only thereby, into the devils hand, and themselves into perdition. Whereupon we hear such speeches testifying sore conflicts between Satan and them, Although thou kill me (O Lord) yet will I trust in thee: and, Though I walk in the midst of the vale of death, yet will I not forsake thee. By which appeareth, that the same god of this world, is not wont to cast mists only before the eyes of the best, but even attempteth sore to take away all the light of their faith from them, as he doth keep it from the other altogether: But God hath taught their hands to war, and their fingers to fight (as it is in the Psalm) the which skill, because the other want, they are foiled.

And thus by this which hath been said, let all learn to know, that none are kept void and destitute of the fruit of the Gospel, and the believing of the same unto salvation; but such as willingly put their necks in Satan's yoke, and are contented to be deprived of the crown of righteousness and life, through their own folly; whiles others, more wise then they, will by no means let it go. But to the end that every sort may see themselves as in a glass, and what their several lets are, I have thought good to set them down briefly and particularly; or at least so many, as whereby the most are hindered by the devil from embracing and believing the promise of life: that all which list, may see how they are held back from their happiness and peace: And these they are briefly.

1. First, some think it impossible to be assured of their salvation in this life, and therefore seek not after it.
2. Others think it possible, but not necessary, that men should busy themselves about it, for the obtaining and keeping of it, and that they may be saved without so much ado.

3. Another sort are such as think it both possible and necessary, but they see it so hard to come by, that they are loath to take the pains, therefore they will not go about it.

4. Another sort are careless, and as ignorant, as they are careless; ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth: who though they come to hear, yet regard not when God speaketh unto them out of his word, their minds being taken up about other matters: Now by this manner of hearing, they come not to understand the doctrine, much less affect it.

5. Others see that if they should labor so after heavenly things, they must lose their liberties in sinful pleasures, which they will not by any means forgo: and contrariwise, that they must suffer reproach, and afflictions, with the children of God: and therefore they look not after the promise of the life to come: as Esau.

6. Others are presumptuous, who through self-love persuade themselves that they do believe, and yet keep someone sin, or many in their hearts, which they will not renounce; contenting themselves to think they have faith, when they have it not; and so never seek for the truth and power thereof. As, they would follow Christ, but first they would go bury their father.

7. Others with these, though not so gross offenders, were never broken hearted through the sight of their sin, and misery; and therefore the doctrine of faith cannot enter.

8. Others think, that though they begin, yet they shall never continue, or hold on in a godly course; or else do take offense some other way: and therefore will never go about it: or having begun, will soon revolt again.

9. Others will say, it is a comfortable thing to know ourselves to be the children of God, and they hope they are so: they speak well of the Gospel: they are glad to hear it, and like well of the promise of eternal life, but they never go about to fasten it to themselves, by meditating of it, weighing the truth and unchangeableness thereof, and making their account to live by it, and to be conformed to it.

10. Others like well of it, as the former, and sometimes weigh and consider the doctrine, and thereby think themselves to be in good case: but this comfort is sudden, and quickly gone again. And thus they are driven and tossed to and fro; yet being close men, will not disclose their hearts, and lay open their doubts to such as may help them, and help to set them at liberty from their lets: although they be utterly unable to help themselves.

These are the chief lets, whereby the people are holden from this grace of believing, without which, it is impossible to please God, or to be his children.

And now that I have set down a taste of both kinds of lets, I think it not amiss to stay a while in speaking to both sorts of them, by whom these arise, that is to say, the Ministers and people. And first, I turn to you my brethren in the Ministry: And you I exhort to consider your duties laid forth at large in the word of God, sometime by the names and titles which he giveth us, and sometime in plain commandments and charge. The names are many; as watchmen, Ezech. 33:7, Cant. 3:3, laborers, Mat. 9:37, the salt of the earth, and light of the world, Matth. 5:13,14, shepherds, John. 21:15, and the good Scribes which bring out of their treasury both old and new things, Matth. 13, and stewards to give everyone his portion, 1. Cor. 4:1, and nurses, 1. Thess. 2:7, with such like. In commandments thus: Take heed to your charge, and to the whole flock, over which the holy

Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his blood, Act. 20:28. And again, to Timothy: I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at the appearing of his kingdom, preach the word, be diligent in season and out of season, convince, reprove, exhort, with all long sufferance and doctrine. 2. Tim. 4:1,2.

All which with the like, what other thing do they teach, but that all such as the Lord hath put in trust with his people, bought with so great a price, should love them tenderly, as nurses do the young children, and bear their weaknesses kindly, rather than break their hearts with sorrow? Also that they should provide for them liberally and with good allowance, and teach them the whole counsel of God, as good Scribes: and regard all sorts as the Lord's stewards, by wise applying themselves to all. Then that they should be diligent and painful, as the Lord's workmen and laborers, going before them as lights to guide, in example of uncorrupt life in all wisdom and gravity, but especially (as Christ taught his Disciples at his departing from them) in humility, John. 13:14,15, not thinking themselves too good, for Christ's sake to be their servants. And to the end, they may bring them to him, and preserve them as chaste spouses to him their only husband; to do them good privately, as their needs should require, by confirming the weak, comforting the afflicted, admonishing the unruly, and being patient towards all, Ezech. 34:4.5. 1. Thess. 5:14. These duties (I say) the Lord enjoineth us by the forementioned titles which he giveth to his Ministers, and by the commandments and charges annexed thereto. Now, as we would be glad he should hear us in the time of our necessity, and especially in our last and solemn day of our departure from this life: so let us hear him thus calling upon us to have compassion on his silly, ignorant and shiftless people. And although the burden that he layeth upon us is great, yet are not our encouragements for that purpose exceeding

great also? The honor that he putteth upon us to be his ambassadors, and to bring the message of so great a king, and the message itself not about things transitory or earthly, but eternal, what can be like unto it? Besides, the comfort which we may reap both by our private study in giving attendance to reading, and as having that, as our ordinary labor to talk with God (as I may say) and his good servants, when other men must toil and travail in all weather, with much care and trouble: and also the comfort by our preaching, which may easily be greater to us then to them which hear us, oh what can be in this life, comparable unto it? Whereby also our hearts are sweetly seasoned, and our lives far better governed, and we more safely kept from every evil way, as Solomon saith, Prov. 2:10, unless we be careless of our own good. More than this, we have encouragement and persuasion to do our duties in this behalf more cheerfully, by considering that so many as we turn from their evil ways, so many souls we are counted to save, Jam. 5:20. And this we should do now, whiles we may do it in peace, and whiles there are many willing to hear, whose example may draw on others: who, if they should not be taken, whiles they may, will not afterwards perhaps be brought on, though we should never so much desire it: fearing that which the Apostle saith, 2. Tim. 4:3, that the time will come, when they will not suffer wholesome doctrine, and having their ears itching, shall after their own lusts, get them an heap of teachers, and shall turn their ears from the truth, and shall be given to fables. And lastly, we know, that the reward after this life, is a stronger motive then all these, which I have mentioned: (but I am sure, that all together are most strong, and should be to us as the threefold cable that is not easily broken) and that is set down in Daniel thus: They which instruct others shall shine, as the light of the firmament, and they which turn many to righteousness, as the stars, forever.

This is that which I thought meet to say to my brethren in the Ministry, who according to their diverse estates, places, people, and other occasions, shall (I know too well) meet with discouragements enough: but if they be wise against the greatest of all other, which are within them, I mean the distemperatures and contradictions, and disputes of their own evil hearts, I doubt nothing, but that the other shall be resisted and overcome. All objections which might trouble and hinder from this work, and duty, are infinite: Therefore only look to God, and have him going always before you, and let his word be the man of your counsels (in which estate alone, sound, and durable peace is to be found) and he will teach the teachable above their expectation, and give wisdom to the simple, and strength to the weak, that by him, they shall find that easy, which otherwise were impossible: I mean to swallow up discouragements, and find the greatest joy in the diligentest performing of duty.

Now I turn to you, my brethren or people and hearers: who (as I have said) raise up lets and hindrances to too many against yourselves, though ye had none offered you by your Ministers. Whose case (for the greatest part) I pity and bewail, that you are so far from knowing and duly considering this great mercy of God towards you, in sending his preachers among you, that very few of many, see the end of their ministry; and therefore receive them not as from God, as the instruments by whom ye may believe, and be reformed, and consequently look and wait for the accomplishment of your happiness, after ye have first tasted how good the Lord is to them by their preaching unto you. Know ye therefore, that God hath appointed them as messengers of your reconciliation with him, who were far sequestered from him before, and estranged: and whereas he might have taught you by other means, and led you thorough this long and wearisome wilderness by other guides, he hath seen this the fittest way to do it, by men his ministers, seeing ye should never have

been able to hear the Lord himself, if he should have spoken to you, no more than the people of Israel were, when they cried out at the hearing of his voice, and said, Lord speak thou no more to us, but let Moses speak to us, and we will hear him in all that thou shalt say to us by him. Hear them therefore, who are able to deliver the Lord's message unto you; whose preaching is life or death to you: and if ye despise them in that their message, ye shall do all one, as if ye despised the Lord himself that sent them. Hear them (I say) in the Lord's stead, in all that they shall say to you from him. Learn by their ministry to see yourselves to be the sons and daughters of God almighty, who, before the ministry of the word work upon you mightily, are his enemies, your hearts being set on evil works, and under his wrath justly. Suffer yourselves to be lanced, purged, wounded, seeing ye cannot otherwise be healed. Receive the wholesome word of exhortation, and be content to put your neck in his yoke, and willingly submit yourselves to his word, that so ye may glorify God for his love towards you, in and by their labor and travail among you, that ye may thereby gain more, then if you had all abundance and your hearts desire.

Which because you see not, I will show you how great it is in some sort: and that is so much, as if you attain it, ye owe no less than your own souls to them for it, Philem. 19. For they shall not only save themselves, who shall perform this duty of teaching among you, in such manner as hath been before set down, but they shall save you also, who entertain them as God's messengers, 2. Tim. 2, and be means to make you see yourselves happy, both here and forever. Which being so, who can sufficiently admire the blindness, nay the willful blindness of the people, the carelessness, yea the bold carelessness and blockishness of them, who see nothing of this which I say, though we speak oft of it and aloud among them, that they may regard it. I thank God to see something, that I see in some persons; I



mean their reverent and thankful receiving of the Gospel, and their care to be reformed by it: but that in so long a time of peace and free passage to the Gospel under her Majesty's most prosperous reign, so few make that the flower of their garland, and their best portion, it is most worthily to be bewailed. Which testifieth too clearly, that either there are many enemies of the Gospel among us, besides Priests, and Jesuits, and open Recusants: and among them that love it (as they pretend) many of them love darkness more than light, because their deeds are evil, and who do not esteem God's messengers as sent from him, for their singular benefit. For then would not some (and those not a few) deny them their due which God hath given them that labor among them; nor withhold their earthly things from them, to whom they deliver spiritual: nor esteem meanly and basely of them, who would fain win them to God: Neither would many of the people lay such blocks in their own way as they do, descanting of them in such wise, as they will be sure that none of them shall do them good. For rather than they would have nothing to except against them, if they cannot find those accusations, that are just, they are content with any show, why they should refuse to be counseled and persuaded by them. And therefore, if they be old, they say, they dote, and know not what they say: if they be young, they have no judgment nor experience: if they be wealthy, then they are covetous: if poor, then base and contemptible: if they be married, they cannot follow their callings, but the world: if unmarried, then they live suspiciously. And thus (to say no more) it is fearful to see how little the people (in one respect or other) are seasoned with the sweet fruit of the Ministry: and therefore, if ye fear God, regard your own welfare and peace, and will not come to judgment, embrace the Ministry reverently, as God's message, and the greatest and most lets of faith are removed.

Thus I having set down these lets which do chiefly hold from faith, both on the Ministers part and the people's, and having said

somewhat to both in way of exhortation, seeing out of these two kinds of men, God chooseth out his elect: I conclude, that there are many lets from faith, but yet withal it may be seen, that there is apparent remedy to be found against them, (as I have said) and how subtly soever the devil bewitcheth and holdeth men back by them, yet the Scripture offereth greater grace, by the which they may break through all hindrances and discouragements, which may keep them from it, if the Minister and people would make conscience of their duties.

## CHAP. 7.

What desire breeds faith.

But seeing it were both long to stand in prescribing remedy against all these lets, and the way for all, hath been set down to come by faith already: I will therefore briefly stir up and advise such as are in good way, and have made some good entrance, that they may see what to take heed of, and what to embrace, and to seek faith by the means, and in the manner which before I have set down, and a little to strengthen them after they have attained to any true measure of it. Wherein it is to be marked (because I before highly commended a good desire) that a naked and bare desire of salvation, now and then stirred up in men, is not to believe, as many think, although without any ground: But seeing such as have a desire sometime, are they for the most part, whom God doth make believers (for while men are void of that, there is little hope to be conceived of them) I will therefore show (for the help of them who do anything look after true happiness) what desire it ought to be, and whereto it groweth if it be true and sincere, that it may not deceive them. For we may find many, who have sometime desired it earnestly, and yet never obtained it, as Balaam, that a man could hardly have showed any difference betwixt their desiring of it, and the desire of such as have attained to it indeed, for that instant. But in time it hath appeared, that it was but sudden, or of short continuance, and failed before it obtained that which it sought: as by them who in the Gospel are said to have joyed in that which they desired to hear, but it vanished; whereas the desire of the other cannot be satisfied without it: but mourneth, and longeth for it, and pineth for sorrow when anything cometh in the way, to weaken the hope, which was conceived of it, till

that be removed, which hindered them from that benefit. Therefore such must know that their desire, which is sometime fleeting and sometime faint, must become both fervent and constant: as in the parable of the pearl may be seen: That as soon as it was found, the value of it being known of the skillful Merchant, he never rested till he had gotten it for his own: for we must know that he, who thus desireth it, is forcibly drawn hereunto by God, who hath showed him his great need of it, and what he shall gain by it, and thereby hath prepared and made him fit to receive it: for otherwise, if God draw not men to the valuing of it, it is of no account with them.

Now further, this desire, if it be the work of God's spirit, is strengthened hereby: namely, while he prizeth, and valueth it according to the worthiness of it, as far as he is able: that is to say, thus, that in his account it far surmounteth, and excelleth all the world, with whatsoever is of account in it: he esteemeth of it, as a most precious treasure to believe: because he knoweth that he which believeth is dear unto God, and shall be saved.

And so must faith and assurance of eternal life be valued indeed, of him who shall find the blessing of it: for which cause S. Peter calleth it precious faith. Now who can esteem thus of it, as that it is better than all profit, pleasure and preferment, but he must needs think, all his praying for it, hearing the word which worketh it, his questioning about it, and his travail and labor in meditating of the promises, whereby the spirit of God writeth it in the heart: but he (I say) must needs think all his pains well bestowed in seeking it, yea and infinitely recompensed, though he hath long waited the Lord's leisure for the enjoying of it? All which means another man thinketh very needless, and that it is mere folly to make all this ado to come by it; and yet he will say it is better than the world also: but he can content himself (when he hath heard the promise) without any

setting of his desire in it, to wash away all with a word of course, that he hopeth to be saved by Jesus Christ, as well as other: Which slight esteeming of it, is too clear a token, how far he is from it. Now who seeth not the difference betwixt these two, to be this, that the one is led by the spirit of God, whereby the father of heaven doth reveal this secret mystery of faith to him, and doth wonderfully draw his heart unto it: the other is led by fleshly reason, as his guide: which is the greatest enemy to this work? For our reason thinketh it unnecessary to set more by that which we cannot see with carnal eyes, then by that which we have in present possession, and see it, handle it, enjoy, and use it: therefore no man doing thus, is led by the spirit of God, which assureth him, who is led by it, that God having promised glory greater than the world (though he seeth it not) he shall find no less, then is promised: therefore he setteth more by it, then by all things here before his eyes.

And this is the way to believe in God indeed, though we see him not, that by this our confidence in him, we may have joy and peace. And because this faith is counted far more precious than all worldly wealth: therefore he who thus accounteth of it, will set himself to seek it willingly and readily, as I said before. And therefore as the word teacheth him, he will have his heart upon the promises of God, because they are his treasure, musing on them, until he hath all difficulties and doubts of any moment, removed from him, which God for his part will not be unwilling to grant. And in his meditation he shall see that he is not more desirous to believe, then God is that he should so do: he seeth that God, for his greater assurance of it, doth through love entreat him: of friendship counsellet him, and of his authority being able to perform, commandeth him to believe: as if he would hereby show that none hath authority to hinder or forbid the same: He seeth further, that as he may receive this promise, having so strong encouragement, so he can no otherwise be saved,

nor happy. All this he seeing, and weighing deeply, beginneth to stay himself, and to lay faster and surer hold on eternal life: and seeth that it cannot otherwise be, but that he should be saved, how far soever he was from this persuasion before. And now he beginneth to conclude with himself, that he is delivered indeed from all fear of hell, and the devil: for hereby his heart is more humbled and meekened to be subject to the will and government of God, without which, this faith is not attained. To whom this counsel yet is to be given (though he be come to such great preferment) that after he hath by the forementioned means gotten this faith and confidence, that he beware of all occasions which may darken or put out the light of it: As that he be not too bold to reason and question against himself for yielding to this truth lately received, and believed of him, before he be well grounded, and have gotten some experience, but follow his rule that guideth him: for example, If any doubting should arise, any lying spirit should suggest, and trouble him with fear of falling away hereafter, or that he cannot tell whether he be predestinate or no, or that many have been as forward as he, and yet have in the end fallen from God, or any such like: he is to be counseled to hold them all for spirits of error, and Satan's instruments to delude and terrify him. And because they speak otherwise then God's voice, which saith, Believe, lay hold of eternal life, cast not away thy confidence, who also saith: The plants of the Lord shall flourish and grow up as the grain of mustard seed, till it have branches and bows: And again, Be ye established, confirmed, and abound in faith. Therefore he is to lend no ear to them; remembering that which is written: My sheep hear my voice, and the voice of a stranger they will not hear. It was the first degree to the utter undoing of herself, and her posterity, in our grandmother Eve; that when God had given liberty to eat of all the trees, excepting one; that she rested not in this word, but opened her ear to a false and lying spirit, in the mouth of the serpent, which under a fair color,

persuaded, or rather covertly enticed, and drew her (contrary to the word of God) to eat of that one tree also, which was forbidden: whereas she should have been astonished to have heard the Serpent speak at all, especially in that manner. It is a dangerous thing to set so light by the word which God speaketh, that we dare so much as hearken to any voice which speaketh the contrary. For she by giving ear to the Serpent went further, and gave him speech also: and yet neither such speech, as whereby she cut him off by holding herself to God's word; neither (if she would needs answer) referring him to her husband (as she should have done) who heard God speak, and received the charge of not eating of every tree, from himself.

We must learn some wisdom of the Adder, who stoppeth both her ears that she may not hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. And if any doubt do so trouble him, who hath attained through God's grace to this weak faith, let him ask of them who have instructed him, the men and brethren, who if they have kindly pricked, can as well skill to heal: and therefore also remove such doubts, as for want of sure laying hold on the promise, have troubled any.

And further, if he which is weak in faith, after laying sure hold, shall yet be dismayed thus, that he cannot keep (for any continuance) his faith strong and steadfast; but feeleth it flitting: he is to be answered, that a child which beginneth to go by a stool or form, is not strengthened, as he which is by long use and custom settled in his joints: in like manner it fareth with weak believers: and yet, after that such shall have experience of their own sincerity, and care, to keep a good conscience in longer continuance of time, they shall be well and fully settled in their faith, to their great contentment and comfort.

And thus I conclude, that what lets soever there be, which hinder men from believing (as that they be unworthy: they shall fall again to their old course: they shall never be able to attain to it: or if they have not like certainty of it always, therefore they conclude, that they never had any at all, or any such like) yet he who earnestly desireth it, will not utterly faint, except in temptation, when he must be well plied, and helped; and when he is not his own to guide himself aright: nor cease or give over till he be persuaded that all tears are wiped away: and therefore will refuse no means to attain to it, by attending on God, and waiting his leisure, and reverently considering the encouragements and persuasions which have been set down, that so he may lay sure and strong hold of God's promises and Christ's prayer for him, I have prayed that thy faith fail not (as one in his case may do) and so by little and little shall see himself to be in the number of true believers, no more to be cast out from them.

## **CHAP. 8.**

How the weak in faith should be established.

And thus to pass to the second head of this first treatise, understand that these two things are here to be handled: first, how the weak believers may and should be stayed in their vehement temptations. Secondly, how they may further prove, that they differ from such as are not believers, although they seem so. Of these weak ones, there are two sorts: some less, some more: both shall be better understood by that which shall severally be said of both. And herein I desire my brethren, who are better settled, not to think this labor superfluous: but to measure the weak by their own weakness at their first beginning, and to think that as the gift of faith is most excellent, so there cannot be too great help yielded to the weak, in directing them



to come by it. Concerning the first therefore, although I have by sundry tokens showed, who are the children of God, and how every faithful Christian may judge of himself hereby; yet for want of experience, and by vehemency of temptation, they cannot so boldly and confidently rest, and stay themselves by general doctrine, nor apply it to themselves; those I mean which are weak Christians, yet such as have attained communion with their brethren in faith and godliness: therefore though the aforementioned properties of true believers, may be clearly seen and discerned to be in them, and they themselves also will confess, that they have been stayed (save in temptation) and that some of them oftentimes have found singular comfort in Christ, and desire much to be with him: yet soon they are driven from their hold, and caused to suspect their comfort to be a vain fancy, and so fall into much fear and doubting, that they are none of the Lord's. They must know therefore, that seeing there is no shadow of changeableness with God, that it is their own weakness so to think, as the Prophet confesseth of himself in the like case, after he had long wrestled and strove with that temptation: for he that hath been assuredly persuaded of God's love toward him at any time in his whole life, ought not to cast away his confidence after, nor suffer himself to be deprived of it, being his chief treasure. But though this may be a stay to a weak conscience, who is sometimes afflicted in this sort; yet I say further, that seeing he cannot be satisfied, till his doubtfulness (which by all his might he seeketh to subdue) be removed, and his soul set at liberty again by some new light in God's promises: therefore he is to be persuaded that he laboring after, and groaning to rest his wearied and heavy heart on these, he cannot miscarry, nor be forsaken of the Lord in the lowest depth of his distress. For someone or other testimony and property of the new birth shall ever be found in him, although he always feeleth it not, neither perceiveth it himself; whereby it shall be manifest, that he liveth to God the life of God: even as hearing, breathing, moving,

feeling, and such like, are infallible tokens of life in the body, which by many likelihoods appeareth to be dead. And if to his own judgment it seemeth, that all hope is cut off through the rage of the devil, and strength of the temptation: yet it is, as if a man were suddenly stricken down to the ground with some violent blow, and amazed, who yet afterward recovereth himself again: so that even he, which feeleth not that he hath faith and life, is not yet without it, seeing he is not without that work of the spirit, which always accompanieth it; although indeed he hath need of especial and strong comfort. And this is mine answer.

But if this be not enough, but thou wilt marvel, why God doth thus deal with thee, and suffer thee to fall to such depth of doubting, sorrow, and fear, although he loveth thee; yea and that after thou hast felt such comfort to thy conscience: I must make mine answer more full and large, for the further satisfying of thee herein. I say therefore, although this be by the wise providence of God, that many of his truly begotten children (who therefore have had sound comfort in Christ) do fall sometimes, and that very dangerously, and do greatly waver, and doubt oftentimes, and so become uncomfortable; which the Lord disposeth: least by their sudden change from so damnable and uncomfortable an estate to so happy and joyful, they should be lifted up, and conceited, and so become secure and presumptuous (the forerunners and causes of a fearful fall) yet this is certain, it ought not thus to be on our parts: for it is (as I have said before) a weakness, which must be withstood and overcome. For the attaining whereto, the occasion of this doubting in him who hath once believed, must be searched out, and so removed: which ordinarily is our own infirmity, neglect of duty, and slightness in the manner of performing the same, or some particular sin; also proneness to sin, a nourishing of the same and strength of it, or long lying therein: whereupon the tender conscience feareth that his

former comfort was but deceitful and vain, and so doubteth of his own estate.

For the right removing hereof, this is duly to be considered, that as the root of our comfort in Christ is not the strength of our Christian life: so the weakness herein, ought not to breed doubting of our salvation by Christ. But for as much as all our comfort standeth in this, that God, who justifieth the ungodly, hath freely given his son, and in him is reconciled to us, who so heartily desire his favor, having been his enemies: and hath by his Gospel called us, and by his spirit wrought in our hearts a sure persuasion hereof; whereby we which were dead in sin, are made alive to God, and so are new borne: and therefore begin to be changed, first in affection, and then in conversation by little and little. Therefore if we have this assurance of our new birth, though there be in us much weakness of the spiritual life, yet we ought not to doubt, whether we be God's children, seeing he that is new borne can never die.

But rather we are to remember first, we are but children, and therefore weak. Secondly, we are very subject to many spiritual diseases; some such as take away sense of life: and therefore we must seek to be cured, and not despair of life, because it is certain that no such can perish. So that if we see, that we have turned our hearts from our Christian course, and offended God, or (which is more) if we have suffered ourselves to be seduced any manner of way, we must not despair, or doubt of the safety of the whole person, when any one part or member is distempered, and ill at ease; but cure it, and labor to restore that to health again: as if it be thine heart, thine eye, thy hand, or any other part which hath offended; resort thou to the Physician Christ Jesus; make thy complaint, that thou art heavy, and wouldest fain return again from whence thou art fallen: and be confident for his own promise sake, who calleth with stretched out

arms, saying, Return thou which wandrest, and thou who wouldest find ease and comfort, come unto me, and I will refresh thee: believe in me, and I will satisfy thee in that which thou hungrest for. Now if they who have fallen and offended God, may turn home again to their first husband with good welcome: shall not they much more be beloved of him, and therefore comforted by him, who have not provoked him, but are only held down through fear and infirmity?

And thus I having answered the doubts of this sort of God's people, weak in faith: I had purposed to have proceeded no further to deal with them which have the seal of God, and which are marked to eternal life: but to have disclosed the pack of counterfeits, and to have proved that many such, as say they are Christians, and the elect of God, and are not, but do lie; that they are nothing less than the children of God (for as the weakest in faith must not be deprived of their privilege, as to think they are not y e Lord's: so must not the most glozing hypocrites be suffered to conceive a false opinion or hope of that which is none of theirs: as to dream of happiness) This, I say, I had purposed next to have entered into: but in the meanwhile, it cometh into my mind (by occasion of such, as I have answered already, that is, the faithful; who having received much comfort through their hope, after an effectual calling, have yet after that, been troubled with doubting's) by occasion of them (I say) I called to mind another sort of God's dear servants, who are weaker then they, deeplier grieved, and therefore more tenderly to be regarded: least that they being bruised reeds, should be altogether broken, and as smoking flax should be utterly quenched.

And these are they, who having manifest signs of faith, and the new birth in them: yet by the subtle and cruel malice of the devil (although not without the wise disposing of the Lord, to their great good, and example of others) are brought to this bondage, that they

are persuaded that they are utter reprobates, and have no remedy against their desperation. They feel (they say) the wrath of God kindled against their souls: and anguish of conscience most intolerable: and can find no release, notwithstanding their continual prayers made unto the Lord, and in their judgment stand void of all hope of the inheritance promised, expecting the consummation of their misery, and the fearful sentence of eternal condemnation. Now this vehemency of temptation, though it be enough of it self barely, to shake and terrify the afflicted; yet when melancholy shall here withal possess the party, then is it made far more grievous: for that raiseth excess of distrust, and fear, and persuadeth itself of misery, where there is no cause, and is the very seat of the devil, being an apt instrument for him, both to weaken the body, and to terrify the mind with vain and fantastical fears, and to disturb the whole tranquility of our nature: and one chief property of this, is to fear a man without just cause. So many as are troubled with this latter, I exhort to read the treatise of Melancholy, set forth by Doctor Bright Physician, Anno 1586, unto the which also I may refer them, for the former point: that is to say, if they be deeply touched with the conscience of sin alone, how they may be comforted and delivered out of it. But seeing it is both appertaining to the matter which I have taken in hand, to say somewhat thereof, and the other treatise not always at hand, I will partly borrow from thence, where it is largely and profitably set down: and partly add myself somewhat for the staying and persuading of such weak ones, as their case requireth.

And first they must be persuaded, that they are not under the wrath of God; neither is his anger kindled against them, for all their fear that oppresseth them, when their estate is to their own feeling, even at the worst: because they have not sinned against the holy Ghost: which sin only is able to shut them out from hope of salvation; and yet many of them in their temptation do think that they have. And to

prove that they have not committed that sin, it may appear by this: that they have not maliciously set themselves against the truth and Gospel of God: nor willfully persecuted it against their conscience, but do embrace it heartily, and love the same, which they are not able to deny. But it is a mere delusion and temptation of the devil, which holdeth them in this terror and bondage: which time will discover, and lay open, as they themselves shall hereafter most plainly see and discern: which, many such as they are, in the like case have found in the end. And though it be a temptation of the enemy purposed of him to their confusion: yet from their loving and merciful father a trial of their faith, and patience, and other virtues. Indeed the ground hereof, is their own weakness (as I said before of the former sort of God's Children) upon the which the devil worketh, although not to wring from them their hope (which he shall never be able to do:) yet to weary their lives with heaviness and discomfort. And this our infirmity Satan doth sometime assay without means, that is, only by spiritual suggestion: sometime by means and outward occasions of evil, and forcible persuasions to sin and rebellion against God. For the first of these two, it is certain, that he after a personal manner to the soul, though not in bodily shape to the eye, without means of outward things, tempteth us, in the very secret thoughts of our hearts. For he, being a spirit (and by creation most excellent) hath access unto our spirits, to trouble them, and disorder all their actions: as we see corporal creatures with corporal and bodily force to annoy one another. And as he is a spirit, so the long experience (which he hath of our corruption, and misery from age to age) giveth him knowledge of our minds more perfectly, who gathereth it by the least sign of our inclination and will: not that he knoweth our hearts (for that is proper to God only) but through his long acquaintance with our nature, he conceiveth our intents and purposes, and that oftentimes without signification, either of speech or gesture. And thus he being able to discover the vanity of our minds, by the

knowledge of our universal corruption: as he seeth occasion, and whereto we most incline, he suggesteth his temptations to sin and disobedience.

Now if to these two we add his malice (for he is not called the envious man for naught) and his unsearchable subtlety, and exceeding strength; and that which is greater than all the rest, that he most hurteth, when it least appeareth, when we least suspect it: for which cause it is said, that he changeth himself into an angel of light, 2. Cor. 11:13,14, we shall not marvel, though without any means, or outward occasions, he raiseth great terror, and dismayedness, especially the Lord giving him leave so to do, for the good of us which are exercised with them. For besides that, we are enticed sometime to the sins, which by nature we love: we are also (especially such as are thus brought low, in the anguish and bitterness of their soul) tempted to such evils as are very strange, and such as we abhor the very least conceit of them; and find not the least part of our nature to incline to them; though otherwise we complain of great frailty: as to have thoughts to blaspheme God, to be tempted; to lay violent hands on others, not moved thereto by any hate or malice; or to devour ourselves, to despair and distrust of God's mercy and grace: all which sins with such other, the party hath never had delight in, when he was yet overtaken with some other sins, and had his heart drawn after them indeed; and yet he is feared with the guiltiness of those, which he ever loathed. And when the devil can fasten upon such as this weak person is, in this wise, he especially laboreth to dim their knowledge and judgment, that they may have no sure hold of any point of doctrine, which may soundly comfort them, that thus he may, like a Lyon, devour them more speedily: For when they cannot be persuaded in their judgment, that God can, or will pardon them, how are they able to desire, or pray for it, when it shall be beaten into them, that they have no faith, nor any better things in them than

reprobates? How can they be moved to stir up that weak faith which they have? No more can they desire good means, as counsel, reading, or any such like, when he hath stricken this deadly blow in their consciences, that God hath forsaken them.

And this be spoken of the devils tempting the children of God (when, and whom it pleaseth the Lord for their trial) and that without the help of outward means, or any occasions to work by: the which I purposed to speak of to no further end, but for the help of such as are sometimes deceived, and so oppressed after the same manner. Here is no fit place to satisfy them who would be glad to know more of this matter.

To proceed therefore, and so to draw to an end herein: As he doth oft without any means, deeply fasten upon the weak consciences of God's people, to fear and dismay them; so doth he the same much more easily by the help of outward means: so that, when he hath covered their hearts with darkness, and brought them into a dreadful fear of God's wrath; and plucked their armor from them, whereby before they had resisted him, he holdeth them at this vantage, that everything which is before them, is made matter to increase their distressed estate. And therefore if they see a knife, all their thoughts are to destroy themselves; if they go by water, they are vehemently persuaded to drown themselves; and so are they tempted to strangle themselves, if either the place give them any occasion, or the instrument wherewith they should do it. So if they see any merry, their heaviness is the more increased, seeing (say they) we shall never come out of deadly sorrow and despair: if they see a dog, they wish that they were so: when they should eat their meat, they think it will increase their damnation; and dare scarcely take the meanest scraps to relieve nature: And if any Scripture be recited to them; oh, it belongeth not to them, they say: they are past hope: and



whatsoever we answer them (be it never so fit for them, and to do them good) yet they are never satisfied; but raise new objections against themselves, as being nothing satisfied by that which was spoken to them.

It were infinite to set down their speeches and thoughts like unto these, which I have now mentioned; which the devil draweth from them by such occasions, as he worketh by: but all this is (as we see) through their own letting go their hold of God's promises, and mercies in Christ: which yet sometime they have embraced, and felt great comfort in; or at least, could not deny, but that they had part in them. And it is the unspeakable goodness of God, that they are not utterly swallowed up; but kept through his secret grace, though not seen of them: and that all other of his dear servants, are not plunged into the same depth of distrust and despair, that there might be no one to comfort and counsel another; but discouragements on every side.

For it is not to be attributed to Satan, or any want of subtlety, readiness to hurt, ableness, malice and cruelty; that either the one sort is at all preserved, or the other more freed from the like measure of languishing and fear, or (which is the senseless sickness and disease of this age, and far more dangerous) from bold security and presumption: but (as I have said) the Lord's keeping of them both: Neither is it any marvel to us (though it be not marked of the unbelievers) because the Lord hath his eye ever upon his beloved ones (as David speaketh, Psalm. 41:12.) That he may see that no hurt befall them; even as a mother hath her eye always on the young child which beginneth to go, that it get no knocks.

But now to conclude, ye will ask, what remedies are to be used against such sore assaults? First I say, that seeing their consciences

bear them witness, how much these temptations are repugnant to their desires and liking; and chiefly raised and procured by Satan in them, who abuseth their simplicity: therefore there is no cause, why they should be so discouraged, and out of heart, although he hath hailed, and violently carried them to such misery; as though they had taken glory in offending God: this (I say) let them mark, as soon as they be fit to hear it; and the rather, they are to count them to proceed from him, than from themselves; because they are such, as are altogether contrary to their former conversation, and to nature itself: and such as have no enforcement, nor enticement, but from him. They are further to consider, how much it doth displease God; that they are removed from their faith, and give place to the spirit of error: and therefore they should gather more godly boldness and confidence in him, on the one side, and more strength against Satan, on the other side. For if God calleth and encourageth us to trust and believe in him: and we standing in need thereof, would most gladly (as we will all say in such a case) embrace his promises made in Christ Jesus, who is he, which should hinder us? If the Lord will justify and clear us, who shall condemn us? Neither let them after all this, be still objecting, that they feel small strength of faith and hope, as many of God's dear children do, for thereby the enemy may take great encouragement to their own disadvantage: for what if they feel not the sweet taste thereof, which sometime they felt; shall they judge therefore themselves to be utterly bereaved thereof? If the soul be now sick, and tasteth not the sweet meats of consolation, which it was wont, was it therefore always so? Will they measure themselves by that which they presently feel, when the soul hath lost her taste? Or rather by the times past (as the Prophet, by his example teacheth them in the like case) whilst it stood free from the disease of temptation, when they found comfort in the spirit, through an acceptable measure of faith.

Further, the trial of their faith is likewise to be taken, by those fruits which are evident to the eye of others, who can judge more sincerely, then the afflicted themselves, whose understanding is much altered by Satan's terrors. And here (as in fittest place) I allege the strong faith of the woman of Canaan, when Christ seemed to give her the repulse utterly, yet she would not be moved from her faith, when fiery darts were thrust into her, three or four one after another. The same I say to other their objections of like sort, as I have said to these: As when they reason thus against themselves, that they do not live as God's children do, nor so holily, as God requireth, and therefore they cannot have such comfort, as they have. What then? Are they reprobates? Have they no grace, because they want that which they would have? Ought they not to consider, that they being the Lord's plants, take not their full perfection at once: but according to the nature of a plant, require a daily watering and dressing, whereby in the end they attain to a full growth in Christ? Oh, but they feel not the testimony of God's spirit, which might assure them! I answer, neither do any of God's children at all times feel it: but that they may see their own frailty, God doth, as it were, hide himself sometime for a season (as the mother doth from the child to try the affection of it to her) that they may with more earnest desire mourn for God's wonted grace: and when they have obtained it again, may with more joyfulness of heart praise him: and yet God doth not withhold comfort from his, many times, when they walk heavily, who (if they could give credit unto him) may assure themselves that they may live in safety under his protection all the day long: but their own frailty, and the vehemency of the temptation, which oppresseth them, diminisheth the feeling thereof. But patience and constancy, with a resolute mind to bear God's trial, will bring a good end: yea and by the meek going under God's hand in these, they shall learn experience, afterward to wade through greater; and yet in the midst of them, to have hope, that shall not make them ashamed.

And thus it may appear, that although the weak faith of God's dear servants may be many ways assaulted, and their salvation by means thereof, to their feeling, be doubted of: yet that such are undoubtedly the Lord's, and cannot be taken out of his hands; because they are not destitute of faith (as I have proved) whereby they apprehend Christ, though weak: and which hath brought unto them much comfort in times past; though for a season the Lord working all for their good, it seem to them far otherwise. And of the former point of this second head or general part of this treatise, that is, how the weakest of God's people are to be upholden in vehement temptations, thus much be said.

## CHAP. 9.

The difference of believers from them that are none.

Now followeth the second point, wherein for the clearer manifestation of that which hath been said, I must now discern from the former sort, such as have great show of faithful ones and believers, and yet are nothing less, and show that the weakest Christians, of whom I have spoken, may see their estate apparently different from theirs; who yet come nearest of other, unto believers: and then answer some doubts, which I know do stick in the minds of diverse about this matter.

And first whereas some may marvel, that I in the describing of God's children, have not rested in these as infallible marks thereof, namely, 1. sorrow for their misery, 2. confession of their sins to God, 3. fear of his displeasure for the same, and 4. desiring some kind of amendment of life; seeing they are also in them, who are effectually called of God: I answer, I have followed the Scripture herein, and that I have in showing who are the Lord's, made mention, rather of

those graces of God, which are properly belonging to the faithful, then of them, which may be in hypocrites, and hollow hearted professors. Seeing we find both by Scripture and experience, that these forenamed affections, and many good and commendable virtues (as they seem to be) may have place in those which do not appertain to God's election: For a man may be much burdened with the weight of his sin, his conscience terrified by the spirit of bondage; he may be pensive afterward for his sin committed, and wish it were undone, afraid for the punishment, and may promise amendment, and walk heavily, and express it by outward signs: and yet not released, nor set free from that which he feareth. So the same person, by the hearing of the promises of the Gospel, may find joy, and delight in the glorious tidings, which it bringeth: and take sensible pleasure in the exercises of religion: He may have a taste of the life to come, as Balaam; he may reverence and fear the Ministers of God, as Herod, and begin to amend some faults in his life, as he and others, of whom we read in the Gospel did; and yet for all this (though fearful to think of) not sealed up to salvation: even thus far a man may go in the profession of Christian religion; and yet a stranger from the power of faith, from the life of godliness, and from that, which accompanieth both; I mean, a good and peaceable conscience.

Of the which argument, because much is written, and where the Gospel hath been preached (of some places I may speak of mine own knowledge) it hath been often handled, and largely, I think; I may say the less. Neither do I speak that, which I have said, about this matter, to discourage any: but partly to drive them from deceiving themselves, which love to stay themselves, they care not upon what rotten hold, and broken staff; partly to make the true testimonies of eternal life to be more preciousy esteemed of those which have them: and such as are without them, to bestow more diligence in seeking of them. For the weakest faith findeth Christ Jesus no more

to lose him, seeing he hath said, that he will not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; and the most glorious shows of godliness, and boldest crakes, and most loud boasts of faith, where yet it is not indeed, shall all vanish away in the air, and come to nothing, not having any part in him: even as Saul's brags, that God had delivered David into his hands, when he was shut in the city, were frustrated to his own shame, 1. Sam. 23:14, and 24:5. The which, how true it is, may appear not only by some examples mentioned out of the Scripture, but also by the lives of sundry in the Country, who have received the Gospel with joy, and been much cast down by the force of the law: But as their humbling hath been a bowing of themselves for a short time, like a bulrush with the wind; so their joy hath been a sudden flash of fleeting mirth, not well grounded in them, and an enlightening of them with the general knowledge of salvation, rather than a sealing of the assurance of their own in their hearts for continuance.

Oh, how many have after the report made by others, what great change the Gospel had wrought; how many, I say, have resorted to the hearing of it, and given good and commendable hope of their own change also, and repentance; who yet were soon weary of the Lord's yoke, and of being subject to his holy government? How many have forsaken the fountains of the water of life, which could have refreshed their souls in their necessity with sound comfort, and have digged to themselves broken pits, which can hold no water to comfort them? And so have started aside, like a broken bow, and have returned shamefully to their vomit, and as the sow which was washed, to wallow again in the mire? Which I speak not, as though God had not both called out of this life many amongst us (within these years in her Majesty's reign) of singular hope, and left a comfortable company amongst us still, with others daily coming on; but to cast their shame as dung in their faces, who have fallen from

that fervent desire of the sincere milk of the word (which once they had) to the world, to profaneness, and to carelessness. These (as the Scripture saith of Judas) went out from us, but they were none of us: for if they had been of us, they would have continued still with us. For when either prosperity hath been granted them, they have waxen wanton, and have turned the grace of God into looseness: or when affliction hath followed them, they have grown weary of their profession, saying as we read in Eccles. 7:12. That the former days were better, and wished again for the merry world, which they enjoyed, and the pleasant life ( as the Israelites did their flesh pots ) which they passed in ignorance of God, and the lusts thereof in superstition, and such like: and so have fallen from the grace of God, and have departed from him, to whom yet they had professed themselves to have been infinitely indebted, as for his other benefits; so especially for his Gospel, in the which they seemed to take no small delight for a season. But these when I consider their falsehood towards God, and their double dealing, that they would not give their hearts to him to believe his mercies, to be their only treasures, and so hold fast their confidence in him (who would sufficiently have recompensed their forsaking of the world) I cease marveling at them, although they are fallen from an high account and estimation among the servants of God, unto a vile and reproachful estate, to be reckoned with the unbelievers; some of them making this their chief religion, rather to be judges and censurers of their brethren, then to hold and retain love and fellowship with them. For whom yet, I will not cease to entreat the Lord daily, that if any of them belong to him, it would please him to awake them, and to bring them home with the prodigal son, in the sight of those who have seen their revolt: that so, not only themselves may be saved, though they take shame in the world; but others also, who were emboldened to sin by their example, may be reclaimed.

Thus, the love of these men hath constrained me, a little to go aside in lamenting their misery, because I have known many of them, who having shined as lights for a season, are become misty clouds to hinder light from others: whom I also counsel to consider, that they have not been driven away from their holy profession by persecution (which if they had been, might have given better hope of them to their brethren, that mere weakness had hindered them) but they have gone away from their first love, and broken off their fellowship with their brethren, even in the time of the Gospel flourishing, and preached in some places with more power, then when they were in the beginning most earnestly stirred up to embrace it: yea, and some of them then forsook their good beginnings, not when Moses was gone aside from them, for the space of forty days, but whilst he was amongst them, and in the midst of their tents, calling upon them to be sound and constant, and to go forward, as he had done long before: and himself also (to God's glory be it spoken of some) with great courage and cheerfulness of good example going before them. And therefore seeing their sin is the greater, they are to be advised to look for better assurance of their salvation, and whom they have offended, that so they may repent, and now take surer hold of eternal life, with the hand of their faith, rather than by so weak and small occasions to let it go. For if they had in the feeling of their sin, fear, sorrow, and other distresses for the same, been unfeignedly humbled, their hearts mollified, and they resolved to seek the forgiveness thereof, and righteousness thereby, and that through the free imputation thereof by Jesus Christ: they should soundly have had their diseases healed, their sorrow and doubts expelled, and true comfort ministered from their faith in him, which would so effectually have wrought in them, and have raised such an unfeigned love to God again, that they would for no cause have been withdrawn; but rather have set themselves to grow in godliness with their brethren, then in the least manner to have returned to their



former lusts of their ignorance; from which they professed themselves to have been purged.

This I have written for their causes, who have been content to be deceived with an opinion of happiness, and yet to be void of it: who because they have had some light in the beholding of their sins, and have been wounded in conscience for the guilt of them, and punishment due to the same; have therefore persuaded themselves, that they have been effectually called, when yet they have not seen nor found this, that their sins have been pardoned to them: and in token thereof that they themselves, have been changed in will, affection, and conversation: and so have become new creatures. For though they allege (and that justly) that in the conversion of Paul, the people mentioned Act. 2:37, the returning of the people of Israel to God, in the time of the Judges, and in the days of Samuel, and in such other examples; the holy Ghost setteth down their trouble of mind, their prick of conscience, and their great abasing of themselves, which I grant are wrought in such, as have been truly penitent: yet there hath been joined also with these, an earnest hungering after God's mercy, an unfeigned faith, the spirit of adoption sealing up their salvation unto them, and the lively fruits of the same: They have believed that God hath become their most loving father through Christ Jesus, who was before their fearful judge; and they have hereby been enforced to love him therefore, and to seek now to please him with all their hearts: and these graces have set them forward in a godly life to bring forth fruits, beseeming their profession.

But these men furnish not themselves with faith, a pure heart, a good conscience, change of their life, through the loving of God; but they let time end their grief of mind, and their wounds of conscience are healed outwardly with opinion that it is sufficient repentance, only to

be sorrowful: some not abiding the gripes of grief, and yet not finding sound comfort against them, have cast them off, and therefore in affliction are from time to time vexed with the returning of them again, because they were never driven away kindly, nor aright. If they shall further defend themselves this way, that they thought their course was good, to be thus cast down, seeing the law was preached to them, which constrained them thus to do: and if they will ask, why we preached the judgments of God to them, if we saw it not meet for them to be humbled? I answer: first, the law was never preached alone by any discreet teacher, who himself was skillful in the doing of his duty, but the Gospel with it. Secondly, the law was not, nor is not preached to hold men under, with the yoke of fear and bondage; but to cause men to see their sin more clearly: and thereby their punishment to be due; that so they might come to themselves in truth, and set more store by God's mercy, and Christ's merits, which only can save their souls, and minister them comfort. Thirdly, we have not as from God approved, nor wished any to rest in any works of the law, or the best actions which they could do, when as yet they had no faith, nor persuasion of the remission of their sins, truly settled in them: but to haste from thence with all speed; and to try themselves both by rules and doctrine, as well as by their own experience, if Christ were in them, that so through him they might become acceptable. Now then if they have heard and received one part of our Ministry, and not the other: if they have placed happiness in the repentance, which they have fancied; and not in the knowledge of God through Christ, which we have urged; they have been deceived through the subtlety of the tempter: if they have sought to please God, for fear of his vengeance, and not because they have found deliverance from death, by his undeserved favor; they have labored in vain, and been withholden from the principal fruit of the Gospel preached. But no marvel, for many are the sleights, by the which the devil keepeth his possession in such, as are not yet escaped

his wiles and snares, in the which he holdeth them; not without their own good liking. He discourageth some from hope and confidence, that they are the Lord's; because they have been more deeply pricked for their sin, and longer holden in doubtfulness, then other of God's children are; and that none have so great temptations and conflicts, as they have: But have not they these afflictions to bring them unto God? And others he dismayeth, and holdeth under with the contrary: as that they cannot be God's children, because they have never had that deep sorrow, and long lying in it, for their sin, as many of their brethren have had: As though men's examples, and not rather God's word should be their rule to follow. So he suggesteth this to some others, that their estate could not be good, seeing they have not had their lives full of some outward crosses, as some of the godly have: and yet on the contrary, many have been long holden captives with these cogitations, that they durst not think themselves to belong to God's election, seeing they are every while under one cross or other. Thus the devil (whose malice and subtlety few do know, fewer do well weigh, but fewest of all do wisely and carefully resist) the devil, I say, holdeth numbers occupied about these and such like points: wherein the trial of their happiness, and certainty of their peace doth not consist. And because religion and holy doctrine doth affect them, and that he seeth they will needs embrace the same, he laboreth to keep them at this stay, to hold themselves contented with that shadow, though they be uncertain of their estate to Godward, and remain in suspense and little hope of their salvation: and so he permitteth them to have the letter of the Scripture in their mouth, and to talk generally about religion, or (if occasion be offered) about some questions, and matters concerning the same; but they hate utterly to be reformed. Who seeth not that he holdeth these in error and bondage, as grossly as he doth the other before mentioned? Who trouble themselves about opinions and conceits, which are not the chief and main points to occupy themselves about; as though

happiness consisted in them, but may fail of eternal life (for all that) when they have all done?

For neither doth this commend a man to God, whether he hath long continued in grief of mind, fear of conscience, and doubtfulness of salvation: but that he be well freed and delivered from such trouble, and discharged of his fear: I mean that he can heartily thank God through Jesus Christ, that he seeth and feeleth himself set at liberty, and by him is made happy: for if the truth of God and his promise make him free, then he is free indeed. Neither is this with a man, or against him in assuring himself of salvation, whether his life be full of afflictions and crosses, seeing God keepeth not always, an even hand in these things; for they are common both to good and bad: but that a man know himself, though a wretched sinner; yet through faith, to be justified and acquitted before God: and therefore is at peace with God, in himself, even such as passeth all understanding, whether his crosses be many or few.

There are many things of like sort, with which Satan doth blindfold sundry of good hope: as that, for having some infirmities, or falls breaking forth in them, therefore they cannot be beloved of God: and when they find that in some sort they can overcome them, then they think they are the beloved of God: in neither of which a man is to place his safety. For both the dear Saints of God may possibly be led out of the way, to commit somewhat offensively: neither is he to promise well to himself, who sometimes keepeth from sins, which at other times he hath fallen into: for it may be, that there is no great occasion offered him that way; or he is otherwise busied, so as he is not so easily carried after such temptations; or some sins of another sort as grievous, do hold him under. And therefore seeing many are deceived this way, partly for want of knowledge and grounded judgment in the truth, and partly whiles they have through long

custom been detained and holden in such snares, they are to be desired in the most earnest manner, that they would bestow some of their time and meditations about the substance and marrow of their happiness, to see that they have a part in it indeed: and as S. Peter saith, to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure: and in trying by all means, whether their faith, their hope, their patience, and love be sound, though imperfect; and true and effectual, though weak and feeble: for upon these the matter dependeth.

And if they can be certified, that the spirit of God since, and through their hearing of his Gospel preached unto them, hath shed such grace into their hearts, as to make them partakers of the fruits thereof, they shall not need to be troubled about the other: and if they contrariwise find that they do yet want these, they must fully purpose to seek for them; and not to feed themselves with a vain and a deceitful hope, stayed upon no good ground nor foundation at all.

And here I must further require, that such as, to whom God giveth any work of his spirit, and whose hearts he seasoneth with good affections and desires through the Gospel, so as they sensibly feel themselves to look after eternal life, that they would cherish, and make much of these holy sparks of grace kindled within them: and whiles they be warm in them, to blow them up every while, with the bellows of fervent prayer, and to inflame them by acquaintance, company, and conference with such, as in whom they see God hath wrought the same things before them; and in greater measure, then in themselves: always highly reverencing God's gifts in them, that they may the sooner come by them: and that the things which they see but dimly, they may behold more clearly, and their doubts may be resolved to them, and they may find comfortable encouragement to go forward. But especially, they must give attendance daily and diligently to the doctrine of faith and godliness, where they may

enjoy that soundly preached unto them: assuring themselves that if they find not that the one thing above all things, chief and necessary, they love it not, as Mary did, Luk. 10:42, and then they shall not have their part in it. But otherwise they may know, that God, who doth show himself kind and loving to such as seek him not, (as it is written, I was found of them that sought me not) will not hide himself from them which do seek him; seeing he findeth all in their filth, when he calleth them to repentance, even the best. And finally, they must wait upon him, desiring him in his good time (notwithstanding their unworthiness) to draw them by his secret grace unto him. But this shall suffice to have been said of them who think themselves Christians and are not, but do lie: and of them who have left their first love of the Gospel and of their brethren, which sometime (as it seemed) they had. Which two being of the forwardest sorts of professors, who go for true believers, and yet being none indeed, do justify the estate of the weakest servants of God, to be approved of him and happy, being far different from them. Which although I have by the way as it were spoken to admonish both: yet principally and most chiefly, I have done it, for the upholding and comfort of God's weak servants, who may see him most loving and gracious unto them even in that, I mean their abasement and humiliation: which they sometime thought to be their utter and extreme misery. And thus much of the second point of the second part or general head: namely, of the staying of the weak Christians, and how they differ from unbelievers.

Thus I have, not as I would, but as I could, set down my meditations upon this first point, to show, who are the true people of God, and given occasion to many, who have little to say for themselves, why they should claim any right or title in that great purchase, to consider of their estate more deeply and seriously then they have done. If these, who are almost Christians, and (as I may say) not far from

eternal life, being many of them usual hearers of Sermons, would inquire about their estate, till they should see it good, as I am sure the other may be well stayed by this which I have written, I should not be a little comforted, whom for their good (which I heartily desire and pray for) this I beseech to hear me in. What wisdom shall they show, to be careless in so weighty a matter as this is, concerning their salvation, and that their care in matters transitory can never be enough? Or what sound comfort do they look for, whiles they rest but in uncertainties about the assurance thereof, which yet to miss and go without, is their utter and perpetual desolation? But they hope they are in good case, and persuade themselves that they are in the estate of grace. I am far from envying it them: I would to God that I could hope so too.

But what evidence or proof have they of it? They can answer, none, but this, that they profess Christ, and love the Gospel, and contemn Popery. They hear Sermons oft, and think not well of them who do not so. Some of the forwarder sort, do think verily sometime, that they believe, and joy therein, and sometime weep at a Sermon: but this is their anchor that they hold themselves by, long after: when they be able to speak of such times and actions done in them. But when they have been at the best, have they then put forth themselves a little further, to demand: are these things sufficient marks and testimonies of our salvation? Or if they be not, do they inquire what be? And do they not cease trying their state, till they can prove it to be good indeed? And until they find rest to their souls that cannot deceive them? Nay rather, they come not to this at all, that they can apply Christ to them: that study is utterly unwelcome to them and unsavory. They can do anything but that: and why so? Verily, even to the end they may be deceived: as men that have matter at law, and are in suit, boast much of their case, but yet are very loath to come to

trial of it: and why are they afraid so to do, but for that they know they have no good evidence to show for it?

They may be compared in this, to King Nebuchadnezzar: he was very earnest to hear the interpretation of his dream, and could not be satisfied until he heard the same. But this was not all that behooved him to do. For when he saw that God gave him twelve months to repent of his pride (for the which, his dream told him his kingdom should depart from him) he forgot his dream like a dream, and did not repent, but at the twelve months end began a fresh to increase his pride, crowing and boasting of his wealth and honor, thus: Is not this great Babel, which I have built, for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty? Whereby we see, that he was more desirous to know what his dream meant, then to be warned by it: Even so, these professors (which I speak of) are very careful to hear the glad tidings of the Gospel preached, and cannot be withdrawn or dissuaded from it: but to lay their estate with it, and to take this warning by it, that they will receive the print of it upon their hearts and lives, and be cast into the mold of it; that (I say) they cannot be brought unto: for then they should find it to be the power of salvation to them, for the which end it is preached.

But what is the cause that they going so far before many other, who are professors also, cannot be brought to go beyond them in this as well? And herein to be equal to the best lovers of the Gospel? I mean, in proving and examining, whether Christ be in them, without they be reprobates: and whether they have not the spirit of God, without which they be none of his? The main cause is this: Their hearts are not upright: nor they will not deal plainly with the Lord. They cannot say in truth: Search me (O Lord) and see if there be any unrighteousness in me, which I do hide within me: and it shall be removed out of thy sight: Nay it is certain, if they might come to trial,



that they do keep some sin (as Job saith) even as a child doth sugar under the palate. Sundry faults, I grant, such will refrain both themselves, and drive them out of their families: but yet for all that, they will not be brought to this, to make profession that they will be willing to be reformed in what part of their life soever they may be justly challenged: for then they should not blemish their religion, as the best of that sort do.

Neither do they set their privileges, which they have by the Gospel, before all other things always: they think it over strict, that they should be tied so narrowly: and that it is neither beseeming wisdom, credit, civility, policy, gravity, or such place and calling as some of them may be in, to show what is in them (though they be zealous) they say, but too base a thing for them; when yet the Scripture saith, I believe, and therefore I have spoke. And again, The zeal of thine house hath consumed me. And again, if this be to be vile and base, I will yet be more vile for the Lord's sake that hath honored me. Yea and they think it is more than needeth, that all their delight should be in the Saints which are on the earth, and such as excel in virtue: and that they should be companions with such as fear God; when yet the communion of Saints is more pleasant and sweet then was Aaron's ointment, and more fruitful than mount Hermon was, with the dew, and Zion and her valleys about her, with the silver drops that fell upon them. Yea for the preciousness thereof the Church spake thus of it: If I prefer not Jerusalem, that is, the welfare of God's people, before all joy that I have on earth beside, then let me lose my best delight.

To return, they of whom I speak, though in their own opinion, and in the judgment of some others, they be in right good state to Godward: yet God, whose thoughts are not as man's, and the truth which must give good report of them, as well as men, judgeth and determineth of

them far otherwise, if that be the best that can be said of their faith and repentance, which I have set down. For the elect and dear children of God do far otherwise: They having found the pearl, sell all that they have to buy it; though they are occupied about many things, yet that one (even the word of God) is chief with them. Their love of it, is strong as jealousy, that admitteth no recompense; and as death that cannot be resisted. They cast not away their confidence, if they once grow to see what recompense of reward it hath: nor will not suffer any to take their crown from them, even their honor that they have in being the Lord's sons and daughters. They covet spiritual things, they hunger and thirst after righteousness: they with good and honest hearts receive the word, and bring forth fruit in due season. They if they have offended their most loving father, cannot be quiet till they return and come home again, and say, we have sinned. And if they be in worse estate then this, they like it not, unless it be when they are fallen asleep, and have forgotten themselves.

And yet what do they in all this, more then they ought? Feeling for all this, their wants and burdens, of which they complain and cry out. And whereas they are mocked and evil spoken of, for this, that they do thus carry themselves in the love of heavenly things, and in the hope of immortality, far more fervently than they who are not intitled to any such thing: it is hard to say, whether they who offer them this injury, do most offend in hindering the honor of God thereby, or their neighbor's welfare, or their own salvation? For God commands, that we should labor rather for the food that abideth to eternal life, then for that which perisheth. And what do we offend then, who do so? And is it not our gain and benefit, if we do so? Therefore let men for shame, and fear of just damnation, desist from such madness.

But to return to them to whom I speak, and to conclude in a sentence or two to them, and such as they are: I say therefore, give no rest to yourselves, till you can prove that you be in the estate of salvation: You have many ways set down, by which you may do it, even in this treatise; in other godly men's labors; and especially in the Scriptures. Lose not all your labor which you have bestowed in seeking to be saved: I mean your reading, hearing of Sermons, praying, and confessing your sins (it is lost, if you attain not that which you seek.) You are not far from it, a little more humility and truth of heart, will bring you further into the estate of happiness, then that ye can fall anymore from it. Be never satisfied, till ye have more than an unrepentant person can have. You count it no toil to sweat in hay and harvest: This is another manner of substance; if ye once had part in it, ye would not forgo your portion for a kingdom. And think this of me, who am not ashamed to be said to have given you this counsel, I know what I say in thus provoking, and laboring to persuade you: if ye refuse, never look to come to the like offer. And to you, and as many as desire salvation, how far off soever as yet ye be; know that ye are in the estate of devils, if ye continue as ye be: and ye are the liker to continue so, the longer ye live, if while ye be called, ye refuse. You are as outlaws: God's care reacheth not to you, neither are you under his protection, being his enemies; but he or some of his sergeants will arrest you, when you think not of it: and hell will receive you; and the happiness which other shall have, will fly from you: which God forbid.

## **CHAP. 10.**

Of the eight companions of Faith.

Now I have spoken of those, who are weakest in faith, and have the smallest measure of it, and have labored to stay them in their temptation: I have also showed the causes of their conversion, the love of God the father in giving his son: the love of the son in reconciling them to God, and delivering them from all their misery: the word of promise preached to bring them tidings of this: God's spirit, assuring them by working faith in them, and persuasion thereof: (and to this end I have set down these, because in the ordinary coming to eternal life, there is no other way:) yet seeing these are not so easily felt of us, as they are sure and infallible grounds in themselves, to us of salvation: therefore I will add some other effects, or rather properties of true faith, which do accompany the assurance of the love of God, and of Christ Jesus in us, and are the works, or fruits of the holy Ghost by the Gospel, which, although they be not of like authority with the former; yet are they easilier felt to be in us. So that both sorts of evidences laid together, and meeting and concurring in one and the same person, shall give him most clearly to understand, that as God hath graciously bestowed it; so we may effectually receive and hold it as our own: and that with more certainty every day, as our salvation shall every day be nearer, then when we first believed. And thus I come unto the third general part of this treatise; wherein (seeing I hope the weakest believers are or may be somewhat stayed by that which I have said already) I now purpose in this last part, to show how all such of God's people, as are stayed from strong fear and trouble of mind; may by other clear evidences, have further proof and trial of their faith, and be able to preserve and confirm it, and how much such an estate is to be desired for the benefit it bringeth. And first, to teach the believer to try that he hath this excellent gift of faith, these eight graces being companions of it, and more easily perceived and discerned, then faith itself, will clearly testify that where these be, there shall that be found also.

This true believer therefore whosoever he be: first, as soon as he shall perceive that God (far otherwise then he looked for) hath given him his son to bring life unto him, and to be his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, he must needs feel in his heart great joy and comfort, as we see in the example of the Eunuch, when Philip had converted him, he went away rejoicing, Acts 8:39, and in Samaria, where when he had preached Christ there, and had brought them to repentance, there was great joy in the City, Acts 8:8. And what marvel? For how can a man be persuaded by good and infallible grounds, that greater happiness is given him of God then all the world is worth, but he must needs rejoice with joy unspeakable, as they which dream? For is there any natural man so senseless, that if he should understand that some portion of goods, as a hundredth pounds value by the year, were befallen him; yet he should not feel his heart made joyful thereat? And can this honor befall any (that he is highly in favor with the Lord of heaven and earth, and thereby of a child of wrath, made heir of heaven forever) but it must needs glad his heart exceedingly, and raise sensible joy in him, which cannot be expressed? As in him who found the pearl. But do common professors thus, or worldlings? When they manifestly bewray that they are gluttoned with the tidings of it? So that, as the Eunuch before mentioned, immediately after he had been instructed in this mystery of faith, went on his way rejoicing; and as Paul soon after his conversion was marvelously comforted, although before as far from it, and as deeply cast down as any: so let it not be doubted of, but when God hath once enlightened the heart of any (which before sat in darkness) to see himself undoubtedly saved, but that it raiseth up in him joy unspeakable, and glorious in his measure.

Indeed it shall not perhaps so much be seen, or appear to another, as by good evidence it is felt of himself. Neither shall a stranger, that is, a man otherwise affected, be partaker of this joy: but that it

accompanieth them, who are by faith made assured of their election; our Savior Christ teacheth, saying, Rejoice not that the spirits are subdued unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

And whereas it may be objected, that it is sore shaken and slaked by afflictions, let that trouble none: for no affliction for the time present is joyous, but grievous: and yet we rejoice even in them through hope, that maketh not ashamed, Rom. 5:4. Besides, we have it here but in part, as we have all other graces: and yet affliction (after we have been exercised with it aright) shall make our joy the greater in the end; when God's former graces shall be restored to us, which we were wont in him to find: therefore Saint Peter saith, Though ye have not seen, yet ye love him: in whom (though ye see him not) yet ye believe in him, and rejoice with joy unspeakable. Now seeing it must needs be thus, it may well prove to us, that the common opinion of faith, which most have where the Gospel is preached; namely, that they believe in Jesus Christ, deceiveth them, and is nothing less than true. For were they persuaded of their happiness, how could they choose but feel withal, their souls more joyful and glad within them, then all the commodities of this life could make them? For we no sooner know ourselves justified before God by faith; but we are at peace with him: and such peace as passeth all understanding. Which after we know how sweet and precious it is, we will by no means forgo again: although for want of stronger faith and sounder knowledge, it is more flitting in some: and yet even that maketh them complain, until they be enlarged: and he that hath not this witness within him, shall not do best to sooth up himself with a vain confidence. Thus I conclude, that joy and peace are inseparable companions of faith.

But here me thinks, I hear some objecting thus. If you zealous folk, who glory so much of the assurance of salvation, and for that very cause be so joyful, ye agree not within yourselves: for some which are of your mind, are ever sad and sorrowful? To this I answer, that many desire to be sure, and groan for it, in the Lord's ears; and in time, shall be comforted, being already pronounced to be blessed: and sometime they are assured for a season, and then are cheerful: and before this, they cannot be so, as they, whose hearts the Lord hath opened more clearly to behold that excellent mystery. But further I say, that it should trouble no wise body to see them mourn for a while after that, which shall (being attained) make them merry forever after. And it is a mere cavil in them, that twit God's weak servants for that which giveth so just cause of mourning, namely their doubting, seeing they desire nothing more than to be assured. And if they do not mix their fear and heaviness with melancholy passions, they offend not in lamenting after God, while they long above all things, to behold God's loving countenance towards them: But if their heaviness make them waspish, touchy, froward, unquiet, and rash in censuring them who are not in their estate; I say these as mad and frantic passions are to be condemned. But these objectors say, that this sad countenance and behavior in them, who are more religious than the most part of others, causeth many to shun religion, and to be afraid to join themselves to their acquaintance and company, and to meddle with musing on the Scriptures, or on Sermons, more then to hear and read them, and so trouble themselves no further. To this I say, that we are not so to look to examples, that we hurt and hinder ourselves thereby from that benefit, which the Scriptures do most certainly direct us unto. But if men would weigh things indifferently, they who are so ready to challenge many good Christians for their heaviness (which yet they know tendeth to the seeking of comfort) might see their own fault greater, whose mirth for the most part is joined with lightness and

profaneness, holding goodness and grace out of the company, and not a rejoicing for that they know God to be their most loving father; without which, their joy is but folly, yea madness; as Solomon speaketh of laughter, which testifieth such joy. But to end this in few words, let such as have true hope in God, though weakly, moderate their heaviness, that they may offend as few as they may: and they that find fault with them for that, let them know, that they ought rather to pity and pray for them, and interpret all in the best manner, and look that their own mirth and cheerfulness be well warranted them, or else it were far better for them to have part in the others heaviness. And for answer to this, thus much.

But to go forward; as the due consideration of the greatness, and persuasion of the certainty of his benefits, will raise this joy in the heart of him that possesseth it: so likewise it will cause him to marvel with reverence, to see his state so changed; himself to be brought from so low a depth of extreme misery, to so high a degree of honor and glory: and so to be enriched by this favor of God, that he shall oft fear on the sudden, least it should not be so, wondering at the greatness of the same: as Judas the good Apostle did, who considering the great kindness of Christ, brake forth into these words: Lord, what is the cause, that thou wilt reveal thyself to us, and not to the world? Yea, and the woman of Samaria, which had long lien in blindness and superstition, and in the fruits of both, that is, in caviling and mocking; yet when our Savior had overcome her evil with good, and converted her, her heart was so set on the benefit which she received by him, that she forgot her water-pot (which in her, who savored before only of the earth, was a great matter) and went, admiring at her own change, to tell her neighbors of that welcome news, which had befallen her, and was a mean of their conversion also, John. 4:28,29. But Saul's conversion did so cause him to wonder at God's work therein, that it caused also them that



beheld it to admire it and to be amazed, when they saw him preach the doctrine, which he before pursued, with the embracers of it, Act. 9:21. So great admiration doth this precious faith work in them that obtain it. And yet if this holy and reverent admiration at so great good things befallen those, or other such, should but then only immediately after the receiving of them be felt, the benefits might seem the smaller: but it is far otherwise, if it be duly nourished and maintained: for they are so sweet, and so far above all that they can ask, or look for, that except it be through men's own default, they are every day new and fresh, and so far from bringing tediousness, that the oftener they be daily considered, and the longer they be enjoyed, the more they will cause wondering at the love of the giver, and what should move him to bestow so great a portion (even more then the whole world) upon so unworthy an one, as would have thought a little before, that it had been an happy estate, not to have been at all. The Sun in the beauty and strength thereof, doth not more cause the eye to dazzle, then the viewing and beholding of this glory, which God communiceth with his beloved ones, doth astonish and abash the heart to think of it: which is so true that David the man of God, did many years, after he felt himself beloved of God, fall into this holy admiration, as that God should do such great things for his soul, as deliver him from the nethermost grave, by which he meant hell.

And therefore it cannot be without gross bewitching of many professors by Satan, that if they have, at the hearing of this tidings published, marveled a little, they think they have received this benefit with that reverent account, that it deserveth, though after it waxeth a common thing with them: for this they say, it were foolish daily to be wondering at one thing, as when we first heard of it.

Full well all such declare what fruit they reap by it: but if they did daily consider their unworthiness, they should see more cause to

wonder every day, then at the first, if comparison may be made in such a case: It is to be wondered at, that God pardoneth sins daily, in that his mercy continueth daily to pardon them, and for that it being so great, should be so enduring also. For who can think upon his slips, and rebellions (I speak of the best of us) which break forth from him daily, for the which the wrath of God is justly provoked against him; and what might be feared thereby, and how notwithstanding them all, he may come to God for refuge by Christ, and be without fear, as if he had not sinned: yea and hold fast his confidence, that God yet loveth him: who (I say) can consider this, but he must needs be astonished at the enjoining of so great kindness; when a cursed man, no better than ourselves, must be sued unto, and entreated by us, and all the friends that we can make, and being displeased, must be pacified with gifts, and yet hardly holden from vexing, imprisoning, and pursuing us to the death, and may not be entreated? Therefore magnify the loving kindness of our God forever, even as it endureth forever, Psalm. 118:4. For though natural reason, even flesh bear a great stroke in this matter: yet we are not debtors to it: and we have great cause whiles we live, to do this.

So that, although I confess, that in nature it is otherwise, that a man cannot always admire the greatness of some rare deliverance, or fortunate estate befallen him by his friend, which at the first raised great admiration; yet it ought to be far otherwise with the spiritual man being a believing Christian: he, I say, having the loving countenance of God shining daily upon him as before, which is a treasure invaluable, should wonder at the continuance of it; especially seeing he provoking the Lord with his sins daily renewed, might therefore fear that such former comforts as had been enjoyed, might have been turned into as great sorrows, and his light into darkness, rather than be continued and multiplied. And this he shall do, unless through unthankfulness (the corruption of nature leading

him thereto) he bury the same in oblivion, and begin to affect too much, and to be over near glued to things present and temporary, setting the creature before the Creator, and the gift before the giver. For thereby, he shall (no doubt) slack his marveling at that kindness of God, that hath never end, although it be most precious: whereas otherwise, he shall be able from day today, to bear down all transitory things before him, with the estimation and high prizing of it. And this of the second companion of faith, namely, holy admiring the greatness of God's kindness.

But that I may not dwell upon this matter, who have purposed but in brief manner to show what a train of heavenly companions do attend upon this faith, and certainty of God's eternal favor, and to leave the meditation of and upon it, to the reverent and devout reader: Another therefore is hearty and unfeigned love, in him (who feeleth this love of God shed into his heart) returned to him again. The which although in hollowness and hypocrisy, the most affirm boldly to be in them towards God, before they have found and felt themselves to be beloved of him; yet the Scripture teacheth us that it is far otherwise, seeing we have not loved him, but he hath loved us first. But when we see indeed what great things God hath done for us, from what dreadful bondage he hath delivered us, unto the which in all our life we were in danger, and to what gracious liberties and privileges he hath restored us, by forgiving us all our sins; then we see just cause to say with the Prophet: I love the Lord, because he hath done so great good things for my soul: and with the woman to be thus affected, that seeing many sins are forgiven us, therefore we must needs love much. So that although before this we were lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God, as others are: yet now that we know God's bountifulness towards us, and the vanity of our fond delights, we have our hearts more set upon God, then upon the best pleasures which we enjoy.

And although sometime before this we loved father, mother, friends, goods, more than God, when we were merely natural: yet now that we know God, yea rather are known of God, we have our hearts set on him, as being our chief treasure. For this our spiritual kindred with Jesus Christ, hath knit us to him with a far more near bond of love: and therefore we rest in him, joy in him, and satisfy ourselves with him; for there shall be ever cause so to do, and that without weariness. There is no end of his bounty and kindness, his mercy endureth forever: and who doth not see that such infinite love of God to us, may provoke and raise up in us, truth of love to him again, that we be ever filled with the fullness of him, as it is said of the spouse in the Canticles: I am full of love yea sick, chap. 5:8? And yet they who shall say to us for thus doing: What is thy well-beloved more then another well-beloved? We may answer them, that know not the love of our well-beloved: Our well-beloved is the chiefest of ten thousand: wholly delectable: his head, as fine gold: &c. Cant. 5:10. But indeed, I must say: except we have tasted of this, our love shall be cold enough towards him, as may be seen too commonly, even in many who worship God with us, that all the love and mercy of God which they boast of, cannot make them forsake their vile lusts.

But to proceed: where these before mentioned are found, how can there be but unfeigned thankfulness, and acknowledging of this gift of God to his great praise, when we shall weigh what he hath done for our souls, and what solace he hath filled our lives withal, which otherwise must needs be full of deadness, or deceiveable and unsavory folly? They must of necessity work the same affections in us which were in the man of God, mentioned in the Psal. 116:12. What shall I give unto the Lord for all his mercies? I will praise his name before his congregation, and commit myself wholly to his government hereafter, who heretofore hath regarded me so graciously: yea and we shall be provoked daily, to this honoring of

him, even to sing a new song of praises to him, who will renew his kindness, and goodness daily upon us still: so that we shall say that his first receiving of us, was but the beginning of our happiness. So it shall follow, that our hearts being daily exercised in praise and thanksgiving, the more we do it, the more we shall see cause to do it still, and so shall wax thankful still in all that God sendeth, and so in all parts of our life, even in our troubles, as it is written, In all things be thankful. And although the world see none other cause, but to murmur and rage in their afflictions, yet shall we see God's favor to us even in them, and knowing that they turn, as well as benefits, to our good; we shall praise God, even for them also: for it becometh well the righteous (who know how greatly they be occasioned hereto) thus to be thankful. It is the love of God that constraineth us, and enlargeth our hearts to Godward, and giveth us matter and occasion of singing and making melody to the Lord, and of praising him, alone, as well as in the assembly of the righteous: and no marvel (whereas without that sweet smell of his love, we should be utterly lumpish, and far from all cogitation of any such matter.) And I say, it is no marvel that continual and oft thinking on God's kindness should make us thankful: for how serviceable, yea how slavish shall ye see a poor man to a benefactor to him in his bodily necessities, though it be but a little? When he can be content to lose his life for him, Rom. 5:7, and the very borrower is a servant to the lender.

These forementioned affections, which accompany faith in us, do take such taste and sweetness in God (he making us so acquainted with his fatherly kindness and bounty) that we finding no such welfare in any estate beside, do now desire to be with him, that we may see his glory, and so long after his blessed presence, that we desire nothing more than being unburdened of this earthly tabernacle, and prison of our bodies, even to be with Christ to see his glory. For thus we resolve with ourselves upon deep consideration,

and certain trial, that if we might have our choice, whatsoever we should wish: one day in sweet communion with God, and so passed and bestowed in his service (as our frailty is able to attain to) is better than a thousand in all variety of earthly pleasures. And if his favor be so much to be desired here, where we see but as in a glass; and his benefits, which he bestoweth upon his beloved ones so sweet, where we are but strangers: what think we shall they appear to us, when we shall see him, in his majesty, as he is? And when we shall enjoy the pleasures of his house in fullness forever? Yea, I say, if here, where we live but in a vale of misery, God doth so show his bounty towards us; what (think we) shall our estate be, when we shall rest from our labors, and have fullness of joy with God at his right hand for evermore? The believing and weighing of this, hath caused God's dear servants to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly: And again, I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.

And this (if we be not grossly deceived) shall cause us, even when our days shall be at the best, to receive, and hold fast this mind and hearty desire to go home, and be ever with the Lord. And if this heavenly affection, and holy desire be a companion to true faith, it might be marveled, where their faith is become, and where it lieth a rusting, who make so little haste home, and have so small desire to be with Christ, where he is in his fathers house, that they may see his glory (and where there are many mansions, even for us as well as for him ) that they cannot abide to hear of departing thither, no more than Nabal: who when he heard of his death, he was as a stone: and who are so besotted with that which is visible, that they have no longing after that which is not seen with eye but eternal: when yet all should know this, that the presence of God in heaven is far to be preferred before his presence here on the earth, yea when our estate is at the best.

But to join the next companion of faith to this, from which it cannot be separated. This maketh us sigh oftentimes, and to desire to go hence, and (that which we thought would never have been) to become strangers and pilgrims here, and so to have no more to do in this world, then we needs must. And this I may truly say, is more then was like ever to have been, if it be considered, how exceedingly we have been tied to the world, what pleasure it hath been to us, to think what we have here, and may have: how we have sought to fulfill the lusts of our heart, the lust of our eye, and what pride, and what glory we have had in the things which we have loved best: yea and how like unto mad men, we have nestled, and delighted ourselves here (where yet we have had no certainty of abiding till tomorrow) as though we should have continued always: and yet who seeth not, that even then when we joyed most in our life, we were but as the bankrupts, which flourish in their kind, and occupy with other men's goods? So that, in which we gloried, was not our own: goods, and glory which we took such pleasure in, they were another's, they were but borrowed: In which times, God was not known of us, nor the daily course of his liberal dealing with his faithful ones, was not once dreamed of. And therefore we being earthly minded, could not savor of heavenly things, but only of the earth.

But since that the Lord hath by faith persuaded us of his favor, and granted us to see, what variety of holy and heavenly delights may be enjoyed of us in this our Christian course, in comparison of the pleasantest estate, that ever we lived in before, we have (as I have said) determined with ourselves to renounce our former course: to hold all things here, as transitory, vain, and soon flitting away, and believing that we ourselves are with all other things, daily drawing to our end; we desire to have nothing to hold us here, rather than to abide here in the flesh, which ought to admonish us, that we keep fast a willingness to die, and when we have gotten it, that we lose it

not again: and the rather, seeing it is that alone which maketh us fit to live, while we remain here, as we ought. Even this grace accompanieth faith in us, after that it is effectually wrought in us: I say not, that we loath the benefit of life which God hath given us here, neither do we forsake our particular callings in the which we are commanded to abide, neither condemn we the moderate care of maintaining ourselves and ours, and providing for our outward estate, retaining (in all these) heavenly minds: but we renounce the corruption that is in the world through lust, 2. Pet. 1:4, and profane abuse of earthly affairs and dealings, which will not stand with the practice of Christianity, nor with the word of God.

Which I say for two causes: The one, because in some respects it is lawful, yea holy, to desire to live; namely, to do good in the Church: and we may and ought to say with David, I will live and not die, to set forth the praise of the Lord. The same I say of dealing in our earthly affairs, to the end we may not be burdensome to others, and of performing the duties of our particular callings: in the which actions, we may have proof of the grace that is in us; I mean patience, righteousness, hope, faith, love; that so our whole conversation may be well ordered, and proportionable to other holy duties: and therefore in these respects we may be willing and content to live, while God will have it so, that we may show forth the virtues, which he hath given us, amongst men: which otherwise should be hidden, and it could not otherwise be seen of men, that any can possibly live godly, who hath an hand in the world; when in the mean while God forbiddeth not the actions mentioned, but commands them: only he chargeth, that in doing of them, we be not tainted, neither have our consciences defiled.

The 2. cause, why I say, that we should not contemn life, and other lawful liberties, is, because upon this principle falsely grounded, and



as falsely understood (that we should forsake the world) diverse have troubled many weak people and abused them; saying and teaching (and that under a great pretense of godliness) that when we begin to be devout, and to savor of religion, we ought to leave the world: that is to say, depart from our earthly callings, and dealings, and also from the society and fellowship of men who are occupied therein. And to the end that greater devotion and piety may be bred in us, we are (say they) to go aside into Abbeys, Friaries, Armetages, and Cloisters, where we may neither hear nor see any such dealings. And as the opinion is plausible to the ignorant and unstable, though palpable to them that are stayed in judgment: so it hath deceived many, and the devil hath showed himself as an angel of light in persuading, that such a kind of life is the highest degree of holiness, although it hath been and easily may be proved to be the den and depth of abomination.

For though many have of a good meaning at the first, gone apart from secular affairs; and betaken themselves to live in sequestered places, because they would not be troubled with earthly dealings: yet subtle thieves arose afterwards, of the popish prelacy, who abused this to horrible mischiefs: for we must not be ignorant of this, that when men will venture without their warrant, the longer they do it, the further they fall into the depth of sin; as a man once gone out of his way, goeth further astray, till he seek to come in again. Which hath been the cause, why much wickedness hath in time broke forth in the Papacy (where the people have been heartened to this monastical life, and superstitious devotion) as idleness, whoredom, sodomitry, hypocrisy, and most cruel murdering of the souls of many infants which were misbegotten. So that (not to digress too far) this is the second reason, why I made plain my meaning, in saying that the contempt of the world is not, the weariness of our life, the leaving of our affairs in the world, or the forsaking of our particular calling;

as though no man may be godly and a believer that useth these: but to prove that one may be a contemner of the world that useth them all; and by consequent, that he who is sure of his salvation by faith, may have this grace to despise the world: which I have set down as the sixth property or inseparable companion of faith.

To proceed therefore, when we see that we be thus made rich by the Lord, after that we have fastened on his promises, (whereas we were before so unlike to find the least part of such preferment) we begin to lament our former unkindness to our God, which we daily offered him, when as yet we knew no such thing; and are ready to be revenged on ourselves for it: as the woman in Luke bewailed her unkindness, which she had showed to her Lord and Savior before, and did now witness it, after she had felt his love so sweet, by washing his feet with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head. For we cannot be ignorant, that when he sought us, we fled from him, and refused to come: such fruits we yielded him of all his patience and long suffering, whereby he sought to win us: we were as the vines of Sodom, and our grapes as bitter as Gomorrah: even as much as if we had offered him the venom of Dragons in a cup, and the poison of Asps to drink. It was the unspeakable mercy of God, that we were not consumed, when we regarded not to know him, nor to have acquaintance with his ways: though he sent his ministers daily amongst us, to reclaim us. We therefore now are ashamed to think what we have done, and are deeply grieved to remember that we should find him so loving and gracious to us, who had done all this injury unto him.

And therefore we sorrowing thus, have been brought to a greater care of ordering our ways aright, and desire to please him; yea, to be even angry with our selves, and to seek an holy revenge at our own hands, that thus we may declare, that we do utterly condemn our former

course: of the which who would have said, that the Lord would ever have pardoned it, and have brought us to be weary of it? But thus it hath pleased him to get himself honor in this world, by showing himself gracious and kind to us so unworthy ones, that we may be examples (as the Apostle speaketh of himself) to all that shall in time to come believe in him to eternal life: that they may the more easily be persuaded, that he will receive them to mercy. Even this made David say, Remember not, O Lord, the sins of my youth: and again, if thou shouldest look straitly, what is done amiss; who should abide it? And to come to the last, we seeing and knowing ourselves thus to be redeemed out of so deep misery, we wishing the same good to our brethren, which we ourselves have received of God, declare unto them how we are redeemed, as occasion is offered, as Philip and Andrew did privately, John 1, and Paul publicly being called thereto. For we cannot choose but speak the things which we know (the love of God constraining us) as well to them, who know the same, that we may rejoice together; as to them who know it not, that they, being yet in the estate wherein we were, may be persuaded to make speed out of it. And the rather remembering, that as it is our duty being converted ourselves to strengthen others: so also because, if we turn any from their evil ways, we have been means to save so many souls from death. Neither are we of their minds, who think it both uncivil, and unseasonable, either among strangers, or their own neighbors, to acquaint the ignorant and wandering souls with this heavenly matter, or to build up the weak in the more sound and clear certainty of it: but pitying their misery, who cannot help themselves, we think it meet to benefit them with whom we are conversant, with that which we have found to be greatest happiness to ourselves. And although our natural corruption doth lead us another way, and our untowardness to good things, doth counsel us to refuse the labor, and to count it toil and tediousness to do so: yet we knowing it to be a manifest sign of our love, and so of our faith, and a duty

commanded us of God; we desire therefore rather to neglect our own pleasure which we might enjoy in the liberty of other talk, then to let go such good opportunities, with hope of the fruit which may come thereby. And me thinks, seeing edifying talk is one means to season ourselves with grace, and to stablish our own hearts more constantly in a good course, as well as to glad the hearts of others, me thinks (I say) if we have comfort by our believing, and know the benefit of faith effectually ourselves, it should do us the more good, the oftener that we should use it, and give hope to us thereof also towards other. The greatest discouragement is, that men (with whom we are wont to communicate such things) are dull, or earthly minded, or light hearted: so that we seem to prevail little thereby with them: but seeing we know it to be a due which we owe to our brethren, we ought to be patient towards them, bearing with their ignorance, infirmity; yea, and with their waywardness also, waiting to see if God at any time will give them better minds: and not tie him to work when we would, nor to think our labors to be such, that if we see not present success and blessing, we may therefore justly leave off. But the truth is, this grace is rare to be found in the world, because men are lovers of themselves amiss, rather than of their brethren, to seek their good: for while they labor themselves too much, in meddling over greedily in the world, or in taking up their delights some other way amiss, there is small place left to this duty: and where they live with others, unkindly, and uncharitably, their talk is suitable to their hearts, that is, unkind, froward, and harsh; seeing two cannot walk together, if they be not of one mind, Amos 3:3. Or if they converse more familiarly with them, and turn their meetings and company to idle, light, vain, and worldly talk; such can have small part in this business, nor consequently any great testimony of their faith, nor comfort thereby (if they have occasions offered them to show their love) seeing she goeth not without her train: whereof this is one, to exhort, and admonish one another: and with our lips to feed many.

These with such holy affections constantly settled in our hearts, are inseparable companions of faith unfeigned, as I have said; although it is not to be denied, that a resemblance of all these eight may be in the wicked by starts, and in their good mood, their affections may thus be stirred up to show for the time, some likelihood of them (especially, where they are under ordinary teaching) which yet otherwise, and at other times for the most part are unsavory, and wearisome to them. And thus to make an end of this matter, these are the graces which do accompany him which believeth, and who holdeth this assurance of happiness, from the forementioned grounds of God's promises, Christ's working of our salvation, and the universal publishing of this tidings by the Gospel to all believers: That by these infallible grounds to build his faith on, and those graces following and accompanying it, which have been spoken of, everyone may prove himself, whether he be the Lord's: and if at the same time, he find it not so, yet how to go about to recover himself again, seeing it cannot be, that he who hath had these fast settled in him at any time, should be any long time to seek of the true way to happiness, (except in temptation, when he is grossly bewitched, and blindfolded) but he shall find it again.

## **CHAP. 11.**

How weak faith is confirmed, and the comfort of it.

And now a little, I will add yet further (as I promised) for the staying and satisfying of those which have attained to lay hold of God's promises, and have some measure of true faith, how small so ever it be. They who have tasted how good the Lord is, by any small light of true faith, they find and feel it to be so sweet, that in fear of forgoing and losing it again, they desire above all things to know how they

may hold and keep it. And it is indeed the most necessary question that they can move. This question I think very fitly to be answered in this place, because it is the doubt of them which are newly borne of God: for otherwise of the daily and continual growing in faith, it is more fitly to be spoken of in another place, where I shall speak of the new life, and the holy course of such as are the Lord's people already. Therefore to this question, it is thus to be answered, that as they came by that little measure, which they have by this means, that they were led by God to think it the most precious jewel in the world; of the which when they were persuaded, they thought it no pain by hearing, meditating, and praying to seek to believe: even so let them settle, and accustom themselves to do still.

And if they do desire to keep and hold their faith from day today, till they see that it is past the danger of losing, let them daily account it their chiefest happiness, which they have in this life, even their precious treasure and best portion: which if they do, their heart will be ever upon it; their fear will be usually, least they should lose it; they will think it most necessary to regard, and look to it, whatsoever they have besides it, worth the looking after: Even as the husbandman will more especially regard his cattle, and corn, being his chief substance, then his Pullen which is smaller and of lesser value. And otherwise every small occasion will hinder them from nourishing and looking to it: and every trifle and fond desire of their own, will carry them after it, and cause their hearts to be taken up with it: and much more, their earnest business, and weighty affairs, for the which they think, that any exercises of religion ought by good right to be neglected, and to give place to them: for we are not ignorant of the devils enterprises; what swarms of evil lusts, and noisome delights, and other matters of like sort, he filleth men's heads withal, even such as he knoweth do like them best, that they may mind no better things: and even such especially as are in the

way to know God's great kindness towards them, that they may be, after some sort, put out of the way again. Therefore not only these, which are evil of themselves, must grow loathsome to them; but they must also be sober, and moderate themselves, even in their lawful liberties and dealings so, as that one thing be thought needful of them, whatsoever they go about, even this; to nourish their faith, and to hold fast their hope of eternal life, and God's favor, seeing God, who giveth it, doth never change his mind, nor repent him.

And that they may do this the better (which is too slackly performed of many, who yet have felt some sweetness in the promises) they are further to be directed, that daily and oft, (which few will be brought unto) they send up strong prayers to God for it, and that they do of set purpose separate themselves from all other things in the most convenient manner, that they can, to call to remembrance the manifold and gracious promises of God: that they meditate and consider deeply of them; of the nature and truth of them; of the unchangeableness and perpetuity of them; how loving also and kind God is: that thus their faith may be confirmed in them: and so bring their hearts by little and little to a new course and custom, that they may have more near acquaintance with God's nature, his mind and purpose towards them: how lovingly he is affected to them: how little they need to fear his anger and displeasure: and how free they may be from doubting and wavering. For it must be well considered and oft thought upon, that weak believers, who are privy to themselves of their many doubting's, do soon let slip out of their memory, and so out of their hearts, such grounds of their faith, as they have sometime holden and embraced, after hearing publicly, or any such like means enjoyed of them: they do soon (I say) let them slip, unless they can bring themselves to review and call them to mind usually: Yea, and further; unless they do provide to help their feebleness of heart and memory (as they shall be able) with some pithy and clear

proves of their salvation and safety; such as they have before rested on, and found comfort by: as this, Come to me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will ease you: and let them reason thus from it: If Christ call them that are laden, and promiseth to ease them, and therefore they may come boldly, that is, believe his promise, and clasp about it, and enjoy it as their own: then may I, being such an one, do so, and take it as spoken to me, as well as Peter, Paul, or any other. Thus should the weak apply it. Another: If any thirst, let him come to me, and I will give him the water of life to drink. And many other such: as in the margin.

Some of these and such like are oft to be thought on, and applied, as I have said, if we desire to keep in the safe estate, which I have spoken of; that is to come to God in prayer when we will, with boldness and confidence: and yet when we do not pray, not to be afraid of him, but to walk in any of our actions without slavish fear before him. And if we do not thus, we shall by and by waver and wander either on the left hand or on the right, and go out of the royal way; even that way of which the Prophet speaketh, when he saith: Thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face continually. As if he should say, thou wilt see that I take no hurt, being ever in thine eye, as y e child in the mothers eye, that it may have no danger. I say, in this royal way we shall not keep safe and sound, except we do (as men dim of sight, use of spectacles) help our spiritual eye sight with oft looking in the glass of God's word and promises: which I say not, as though God did change his mind so oft (seeing there be so many doubts in us) who is ever one and constant; but for that we have riven memories, wandering affections, and deceitful hearts, in all which respects we have need of such help and remedy. And if it trouble any at the hearing of this, asking, what shall the weak do, who cannot do thus? I answer, they that know not this, cannot do it: but yet is not their estate therefore to be rested in, no



although they fear God; only let them follow that which they know: and they who know this, which I now teach, will neglect nothing willingly of that which I say, though they be weak; for it is their own gain and advantage, which they would not lose: yet I mean not that they should neglect their particular calling for all this, seeing both may well, yea and ought stand together. Thus therefore let God's children keep themselves from fear and doubting, when they are in greatest danger of both, by an oft and serious weighing, how gracious and good the Lord is unto them, that it may comfort them even at the heart. And for a testimony hereof, let them use to try in smaller benefits, how they can believe that God will keep covenant with them; for thereby shall they have further proof, with the former, to their consciences, that they grow to believe him in greater. For although there must be some measure of true justifying faith, before we can do anything acceptable to God, Hebr. 11:6, yet for the confirming of it, we must observe how God's word is performed in other things also.

And to this purpose they are also to help their weakness in faith, by ordinary and reverent hearing the glad tidings of reconciliation publicly preached unto them: for that is one special end thereof, as the Apostle saith; and therefore are the Sacraments also given by God, which seal up this truth in their hearts, which they have begun to taste of: Do this as oft as ye do it, in remembrance of me. With these two they must carefully retain a viewing of their sins, which by examination they have found out: They must, I say, be daily kept within that compass, and keep under their hearts, by a mean and base thinking of themselves from fullness and loathing of Christ's death, as it is made too common a reckoning of. Neither can it be felt sweet and pleasant of any, except their sins be felt bitter and tart. And besides all this, their former experience is not the least help to establish and settle them in this persuasion: that for as much as they

cannot deny, but that they have believed with joy, and received much ease to their heavy hearts thereby: therefore much more now they ought, and lawfully may rest and persuade themselves so again. And therefore to say with themselves, it is but their own weakness, when they are pierced thorough with such doubts: from God there is not the least occasion offered, who is ever one and changeth not: for all this might they have with God's good liking; and worse estate then this they need not to be in, if they would be advised by him, and not by the evil custom of their hearts, whereby they are easily brought to think, that faith and other graces will dwell in them, though they be slightly cared for, and regarded: which conceit is most false and erroneous.

And that the Lord giveth his beloved ones such bold and free access to him, to know his mind toward them, and to have this holy acquaintance with him (which can hardly be persuaded to the weak in faith, at their first coming to him) hereby it may appear, that he saith, he will not count them as servants, but as friends, with whom he will communicate his very secrets, as far as shall be expedient for them to know them: and as Paul saith; God of his rich mercy hath loved us through much love. God saith, they are as the apple of his eye, and therefore dear unto him: he telleth them that he hath taken from them the spirit of bondage, that they should no longer be afraid of him, but serve him without fear: and to rejoice in him always: which cannot be, except they knew his mind, and affection to them, yea and that more clearly than the son can know his fathers, or the wife her husbands mind. And therefore if they who have begun to lay hold on eternal life through believing, should by some occasion lose the feeling comfort of their faith; as by Satan's fearing them, with their coldness, falls, weaknesses, or such like: yet are not they to give place unto doubting; especially being such as have felt assuredly the love of God by Christ shed into their hearts: but to count it their

frailty and timorousness, and that without cause; even for that they were not better acquainted with the will of God, who loveth to the end all such as he hath once loved.

And yet this is not without the most wise providence of God, who disposeth all these weaknesses of theirs to their good, that they may be humbled the more in themselves, and rise to their faith again; and to the glory of God, who bringeth back again, those who were almost in their own feeling, at the brink of hell. The same I say of other lets which they may be overtaken by, as of their losing of the sense of their faith, through neglecting the means whereby it ought to have been preserved; or by slightness in the use of them; or by letting loose the heart after some vanity or worldliness, which it lusted after; or being disquieted, and unsettled otherwise: this is not their refuge to say, we must be content to go without it: and it is impossible to hold it: when we have bestowed all our travail, we have done it but in vain: But as they espy their weakness, so let them remember how they have fallen, acknowledge it to the shame of the evil heart, and so recover that one thing which is amiss, and hold their confidence as before, and let not the whole frame, and well-ordered course of their life be broken off for that one thing: as he that hath ach in his teeth, or a wound in his leg, doth not neglect the health of his whole body for that, but seeketh the redress of that one, that the whole may be in good case, as it was before.

And seeing it helpeth much to the nourishing of our faith, among all other times, to season our hearts, in the morning, if it may be, with the recording and thinking upon God's promises of his love and salvation: therefore, if the morning meditating on the promises, with earnest prayer thereto adjoined, should by any necessary occasions, or weighty affairs, or other lets of necessity be intermitted, being the thing which ought most carefully to be looked to; yet let them

provide, that this duty be not altogether omitted, as though it were some light matter, which needed no such attendance to be given unto it: but let it, as soon as it may, with conveniency be performed, if they desire to pass the day in safety and peace; as knowing otherwise that Satan in this their weakness will give them little rest. And so shall they have it as a strong weapon through the day to shield them from the violence and fury of the enemy.

But this is not the place to show how the day is to be passed; that shall follow after, but only by the way, as in most fit or place to advise how the weak Christian is to keep his faith.

The sixth mean to hold and confirm faith, is the examples of others, whom of weak, we have seen to become strong in faith: as Moses, with whom as God hath been, and with other his good servants to strengthen them: so will he be with us, till he perfecteth in us in like sort the work which he hath begun. And this be spoken of the means, by which weak faith is helped and confirmed.

## **CHAP. 12.**

The sweet fruit and benefit of the preserving and confirming of our  
faith.

Now if any think the looking to these means, and this daily diligence for the preserving of faith to be overmuch, let them understand, that the benefit is most great which it bringeth. And if this answereth them not, let them hear the Apostle, who saith, that our faith

consisteth not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God: as if he should say, that it is not a matter so soon wrought, as it is said to be in us, but a gift wrought by God, and therefore (by seeking it, as he hath appointed) and to be nourished, and continued, as he hath prescribed, which is by often recourse to God, and much searching out of our hearts for and about the same. And therefore (as I have said) if men make it not the chiefest of all other things, as it is in itself, and hold it fast, as the first and principal: it is not their hearing, and reading about it, nor their talking of it, that shall be able to profit them. I will rehearse a speech of a godly Christian preacher, and one that deserved to be heard, whom I have oft been present with, when he uttered the same.

Whiles I thought verily (said he) that I had faith, but yet held it not by the surest grounds, I thought of it sometimes, and was glad to think that I had it: holding my persuasion thereof, by such evidences as I had before enjoyed, rather than I could tell what sure warrant I had then of it: but I took no great pain to confirm it by daily meditating on the promises, neither bestowed anymore diligence in and about that, then upon other duties. But when I saw more clearly how gainful and beautiful a grace it is, and how I must live by it, having no less need of it, then of the air to breathe in: I sought more certain ground of it, and that with greater care then I had before: and since I knew that I had it by more, and those infallible arguments and testimonies, I could never be weary of looking to and increasing it (as I had learned how) but for some years space have done, and do every day nourish and strengthen it, and I recreate myself in thinking what benefit I have by it, until my gain thereby, and pleasure therein, do keep me there with delight, more than in all pastime; and the labor which I bestow about it, is so far from toil or wearisomeness, that it is my greatest solace: neither do I think or feel myself to be armed to the well going through the affairs of the day, before I have

prepared myself thereto, by refreshing my soul, with considering God's abundant love and favor towards me, and rest upon it as mine own. But when I have done it, I am (by good heed taking) cheerful, and in good estate, all the day after: and so I am (in reverence be it spoken) said he, persuaded, that I shall continue to do.

Now to make use of this Christian speech, because it is according to knowledge, and I have said nothing of him, which is not as needful for us; and his practice agreeth with the doctrine of the Scriptures: if we will speak every man the truth, what comfort, or well-ordered estate can be in our lives any day without it? And when that true and lively beholding of God's gracious kindness is not present with us to begin the day, what going forward in it, is to be looked for? But in unsavory lightness, and so be deceived: or in care and sorrow, and so be disquieted? Therefore if men were wise, they would see that they could not well want this any day; especially seeing God hath given liberty to them to enjoy such sweet communion with him by means of this precious faith: but they would consider their end, how uncertain it is, as all other things which they enjoy, and therefore be ready for it, at one time as well as another, which they might do, if they held fast their confidence, that bringeth with it so great reward. And how shall we lead our whole life by faith, in our particular parts thereof, believing that God will guide and bless us, as we shall hear in the next Treatise, if we be not first well-seasoned and acquainted with this justifying faith?

But, alas, we verify the saying of our Savior, though to our great shame it may be spoken: that the children of this world are wiser in their kind than we: who if they be disappointed of their desire one way, have twenty shifts to seek it another. But it is too manifest, that the most part, even of the better sort, and those who have tasted of this faith and assurance already, do not think this possible to keep,

yea and increase it from day today: and therefore go not about it, but are content to hold it by starts, now and then, when it is revived in them by some special help of preaching. And thus doing, they see not the twentieth part of God's bounty and fatherly affection towards them, who giveth them not some taste now and then of his abundant love, but would have them filled with it, and that continually; yea and thereby to be in safety all the day long: which if many of God's servants did believe, as they do any article of their faith, that it is true; how greatly should their heavy hearts be made joyful, and their heads lifted up with cheerfulness, whereas now deceivable mirth, or unprofitable sorrow holdeth them down, either at their labor, or from it, seeing they have not this boldness to rejoice in the Lord always, and that because they believe not always, neither think that they may, or can possibly attain to it.

And by this means, that they are so often cast from their hold, of faith, and so of peace, and constancy therein, the devil weakeneth and holdeth back sundry (which are coming on) by their example: thinking themselves well in the case they are in, rather than in following them, except they saw some beauty and excellency in their lives, more than is in themselves.

Besides this, they not holding their persuasion for continuance, as well as for some special time, do bring much unprofitableness into their lives, and sometimes dangerous outstaying's, and give many offenses, which otherwise they should not: by all which, their heaviness is increased, and sometimes long lien in. And that which is hardest of all the rest, they either dare not rise up again out of their sorrow, or know not how they should: and so they make the most part of their life to be very bondage, which through believing should be most sweet liberty: and thereby enjoy not many comfortable fruits of faith in their lives, which other Christians do. And whiles all this

cometh to pass, we must needs say, that God is not honored of them, nor his praises so in their hearts, as they should, and might be; if they from time to time did nourish and live by this their faith and confidence. But though I would have it received, that much sweetness accompanieth this faith, yet I mean not here to set down the privileges, which accompany it and a godly life; that is done in another place.

This spirit of bondage therefore, which holdeth them oft in fear, I earnestly wish were abandoned: and that this wavering and needles doubting, which possesseth so great part of their life (especially when any great affliction arresteth them, or lieth long upon them) were as far from them, as the East is from the West: so that they might see the abundant favor of God far greater towards them, then ever they did: and that by how much they may enjoy it more usually, then ever they thought it possible. And as for them that count their advice and direction for the preserving of faith, they shall go without the fruit of it; till they see that they lost not their labor, who were thought to do too much, seeing they did more than themselves could be persuaded to do. Therefore (as I have said) let all such, as to whom God hath sealed up their salvation by his spirit, by the which he hath given them an earnest of it, be diligent to hear and mark the promises daily: so shall they wax familiar, and well acquainted with the mind and purpose of God, howsoever the profane worldlings make them common things, and are soon weary of hearing then. Let then weigh then also, and apply them to their own souls daily by private meditation: let them learn of other the faithful servants of God, how they do most especially preserve their faith. And let them be thoroughly persuaded, that how crossly soever things come to pass, yet the Lord seeketh their good by them, and doth not delight in their sorrow and troubles: for if he did, he could a thousand ways make a riddance of them, but sendeth them specially for their benefit and



good; so shall they grow rooted, and established in their faith, as the grain of Mustard seed, which after rooting becometh a stalk, and hath branches and boughs: and as that groweth, so shall sound peace and safety, and strength against their corruptions; yea and these means whereby it is preserved, how wearisome soever they have been sometime, shall become easy and pleasant, and from time to time more and more, so that they may be assured that they have cause in all things to be thankful. And that should be thought a rare and special benefit, if we consider how many thousands have not an hour of this comfort through the year, no not through their whole life. And thus much to show who is the Lord's, and how the weak believer is to be upholden: and how he differeth from him who is not, and what graces accompany them who believe; and how he who hath faith should grow till he be settled; and what ease and gain is found thereby. And by that which hath been said in this treatise, it may be gathered: that although this faith be in substance one, and the same: yet that there are three degrees of it. The first is the weakest and least measure: when there is yet no assurance in the believer; and yet inseparable fruits, and infallible tokens of it: as I have set down. The second degree is, when some assurance is wrought in the believer at some time, but very weak: and is often to seek and wanting, and recovered again by entering into due consideration of his estate, and of the truth of God, who hath promised it. The third is the highest degree of it, though more strong and better settled in some than in other: and this hath assurance accompanying it for the most part usually, unless the believer do quench the spirit in himself; or the Lord (to show him that he standeth by grace) do leave him to himself, for his own glory, and the better establishing of him afterwards.

This I have said for their cause, who being tender and weak in faith, would desire some help herein: the larger handling of the helps is to

be sought in the third part of this treatise, where the helps to preserve the whole heart, and consequently faith, and all godliness in the believer, is set down. Now I think it convenient to lead forward this believer to set this faith of his awork by a godly life, and teach him what manner of course and estate that is: which is the second treatise of this book.

The end of the first part of this Treatise.

## **THE SECOND TREATISE,**

SHOWING AT LARGE WHAT THE LIFE OF THE TRUE BELIEVER  
IS, AND THE CONVERSATION OF SUCH, AS HAVE ASSURED  
HOPE OF SALVATION.

### **CHAP. 1.**

The sum and order of this second Treatise.

Hitherto I have showed, who are they whom the Scripture calleth believers, and the sons, and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Now, it is necessary, and followeth in order, to show what the life of the true believer is: and how he, who hath faith, must behave himself throughout his whole conversation: for as yet nothing hath been said of that. But that treatise; namely, what the life of the true believer is,

was reserved to this place, for avoiding confusion: and without it, a man could neither well see the excellency, and beauty of faith, which without works is dead: neither could the believer know how to occupy himself throughout his life, but must of necessity be idle and unprofitable: who yet must join with his faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love, &c.

This (I say) is the argument and matter to be handled in this treatise. And seeing there is much difficulty about this point, as about the other, in the former treatise; and seeing it is of greatest weight and moment of all other, except that: it must with like care be looked into and laid forth. For some think, that repentance and godliness, is nothing else, but grief for some offense committed: and so Judas might have been godly. Some think, that to amend something which was amiss, is godliness, especially, if they also do some good therewith; and so Herod that caused John to be beheaded, might have been godly: For he revered John, and when he heard him, he did many things. Some think, that if they have been well moved at the hearing of the word of God, and do bow themselves before God, for the time, in outward signs of repentance only; that then they be godly in deed: but so might Ahab have been godly. Some, if they can shut up all their vain talk, bad dealings, foolish jesting's, with such other merriments at their meetings, in this manner [Lord have mercy upon us, we are all sinners] that then they have repented: and so the common sort of wicked ones, may be said to repent and to be godly. And lastly, popish contrition, auricular confession, and satisfaction, is thought in popery to be good repentance: which (as they understand them) are as far from it as any of the former. These are some few, of a great many opinions about this matter; all which are most dangerous and erroneous: It is therefore very necessary, that we may understand the will of God aright concerning this, and what to lean unto, that we be not deceived.

My purpose is therefore in this treatise, to set down at large what a godly life is, and wherein it consisteth, that he who desireth it, may see, whether his course and behavior be such or no: and the trial of this must be made of him, who hath tried himself by the former, that the one may be seen to go with the other, and both together as twins; so that he who hath not both, may be truly said to have neither. And in laying forth this matter, I will follow this method and order: to refer all that shall be spoken about it, to four general heads or parts. The first, that a godly life must of necessity go with the faith before spoken of: and that it is the foundation and ground thereof, whereby we receive and give credit, not only to the promise of our salvation; but also to all other promises of temporary benefits appertaining to this life, and also to the whole word of God, with a mind to rely upon it, and to be guided by it. This is the first head of this treatise. The second, that there must be a pure heart in him who must lead a godly life: a pure heart, I say, renewed and changed from that it was before, as Ezekiel speaketh, I will take away your stony or hard heart from you, and put a new heart in you: This must of necessity be in him who shall live godly, and so consequently, that the whole man be changed. Thirdly, I will set down the first part of a godly life; and show that it is a renouncing and forsaking of all sin, both inward and outward. And fourthly, I will add the other part of godliness, declaring that it consisteth in a full purpose of the heart, and a true endeavor of life, to obey God in all things, even unto the end. By which also may be gathered a short description of this life of the believer; that it is such a conversation, as being grounded on faith in a sanctified person, renounceth all evil, and practiseth good duties, though weakly, yet constantly afterward. And to these four shall be annexed reasons to persuade to a more cheerful practicing of this godly life (seeing the best need spurs) and the answering of objections, which might withhold and hinder from it. All which considered, it shall not be hard for him that will learn, to understand

plainly and clearly, what the life of the believer is, and withal, whether he which professeth himself to have true faith, be also in his life and conversation reformed, and how he may be so. So that although there be many measures of grace, and some are in many degrees before other in this estate and condition of living godly: yet everyone in whom these things shall be found, may prove himself godly, howsoever he wanteth somewhat, which many others have. And of the sum and order of this treatise in general, thus much be said.

## CHAP. 2.

That a godly life cannot be without unfeigned faith; nor this faith without it: which is the first point in the first general head to be handled.

Thus, having showed what the sum of this treatise is, and the order and parts of it, I will now proceed: and first, seeing I have taken in hand to describe the life of the believer, and what the godly life is, which he must lead: I will endeavor myself to help and direct him herein; as God hath enabled me, that as in the former treatise he may prove and see himself to have faith to be saved, so he may learn by this, to join with his faith, godliness.

But before I lay forth this godly life at large, in this chapter, I will begin with the first point of the first general part of this treatise, that is, that seeing godliness cannot be without justifying faith, but springeth and ariseth from it, as the branch from the tree; for so Saint James saith, Show me thy faith by thy works: therefore where no true justifying faith is, there can be no godly life. And so he, who is no true believer, cannot have any sparkle of godliness in him; but is utterly destitute, and void thereof, even altogether ungodly, as the Apostle writeth: We all had our conversation sometime as other disobedient men, in the lusts of our flesh, doing those things which liked us: where we see, that this was the life of all, even the best, to be strangers to the life of godliness, and the children of wrath, before they believed, Ephes. 2:8. But least any through ignorance might say: though we did that which liked the lusts of our hearts, yet we did not only so, nor all that we did, was not such, but some good we did amongst the evil which we committed, (and if it be so, they think that the one may answer for the other:) I further say to them, out of the

place to Titus 1:15. Unto the pure, are all things pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their minds and consciences are defiled: to the Hebrews, that without faith, it is impossible to please God, whatsoever things we do, but all is abominable, odious, and vile before him. For as is the fountain, so are the rivers which run from it; and as is the heart, and the cogitations of it, so are the actions which proceed from it: but the cogitations of the heart are always, and only evil. So that (to return) in the unbeliever there is no good thing that pleaseth God: his best actions are turned into sin: his prayers, alms, reading, hearing, confessions, thanksgivings, and whatsoever else, they are all abominable in him; and God will never be pleased with his works and services, until the person, namely, even he himself be accepted of him; and that is not till he believe: as it is in the epistle to the Hebrews 10:38. The just shall live by faith, but if any withdraw himself [that is, thorough unbelief] my soul shall have no pleasure in him, saith the Lord.

And this is the work which God requireth of him, above, and beyond all works, that he believe in his son, that he hath already wrought his happiness: and therefore that he shall be saved by him only. Now if a man, before he have some sure tokens of God's love, and consequently some measure of true faith, cannot so much as enter into a godly life, nor have anything which he doth, approved of God (as we have seen, and the Scriptures do more fully prove): how dangerously then do many thousands deceive themselves? Of which number, some are verily persuaded that they love, fear, and serve God, not knowing what faith is: other think they have repented truly, because they have mourned and been sorry for their sin, by fits at some time; yet have no faith, nor any constant desire of it: and others, because they do many things in their own nature good, imagine themselves to live godly, when yet a man may do many good

actions, and for all that, they shall not be good to him, as long as faith the principal is wanting in him, as hath been said.

And if any count this doctrine hard, and say, that if this should be true, it were the next way to drive many to discomfort, yea and to desperation: let such know, that if any despair because their wicked lives are condemned of God, the doctrine is not to be blamed, but the persons themselves, who should rather repent; for the doctrine is the doctrine of the Scriptures: and all sound Divines both old and new have taught it. And if it be hard, it is hard to the ignorant, unstable, and obstinate, who indeed can take little comfort by it, but pervert all things to their own destruction: and although they despair not, yet their case will be no better in the end then desperate, if they so abide. But the truth of God may not be buried for men's frowardness, who cannot away with it.

But let this suffice to show, that no man can lead a godly and Christian life, before he hath some measure of true faith, as it hath been set down and described in the former treatise. And as I have showed, that no man liveth godly which believeth not: so it is on the contrary, to be marked, that no man who believeth, and nourisheth and preserveth his faith, can live wickedly, nor fashion himself after men of the world, or return to the offensive, and unsavory course, which he walked after before: but as he is new borne, so he is a new creature, and (as he doth except at the first beginning of his conversion, or in vehemency of temptation) knowing himself to be of the number that shall be saved, he honoreth him who will save him: for his love constraineth him so to do. Which although it be most true, and will be granted of the greater part: yet because many content themselves to affirm it only, and other in a general manner do coldly go about it, I mean to honor God and show forth the fruits of faith (which they think they have) as though any little would serve,



I think it very meet to set down some special proofs of it, that cannot be excepted against.

And first, by that place to Titus: The grace of God, that hath appeared, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: and to live holily, righteously, and soberly in this present life; he saith plainly, if we be once enlightened by that divine grace and gift of the Gospel to see ourselves partakers of salvation: we are by the same knowledge, taught (and so learn it) to renounce our old conversation. So that even as a scholar plainly taught by his master, becometh skillful in those points wherein he was instructed: so is a man taught, to see God worthy all honor, and to give it him, by casting away the works of darkness, when he seeth that he hath brought him out of most woeful bondage, into the glorious liberty of God's children. And is it any marvel? For what will we not be ready to do, for such a one as hath but once saved our lives from death? How much more do all they which know that they are discharged forever from fearful damnation, see infinite causes why they should change their wicked lives (which so much displeased God) and are also ready to do the same? Be not therefore deceived, God is not mocked by them, who profess they look to be saved, and do not bring forth fruit worthy amendment.

It is not a bare wandering desire to please God, which this precious faith, and assurance of salvation worketh: but it frameth also the man unto it, and teacheth him in some true and acceptable measure to go about it. The tidings of this treasure appeared so glorious to Agrippa, being a King, and therefore acquainted with earthly felicity; and a Heathen, and therefore unfit to see very easily into spiritual things: yet this appeared so glorious tidings to him, when he heard it by Paul, not preaching in the pulpit, but standing a prisoner at the bar, that it caused him at the first to say: Thou hast almost persuaded

me to become a Christian. And therefore he, who hath not only heard a sound of this heavenly news with his ears (which yet did weigh equally against a Princes kingdom in a Heathen man's judgment) but hath believed it to be his own, and that forever: do we think, that anything will be thought too dear for him, who hath freely given it him? And therefore when I see one cursed man rail against the doctrine of God's word, and his faithful servants: another to love the Christian life, but from teeth outward, and diverse men diversely bewitched; but all of them to love darkness more than light, because their deeds are evil, John. 3:19. I marvel not at it: they do after their nature and kind. As they are not obedient to the will of God, so neither indeed can they be; who yet for all this, know not any cause why they should accuse themselves: but if they might see what kindness God offereth them, even to be made happy, and might believe the same, ye should see them changed, as sensible as ever was Saul, of a persecutor to become a preacher; so they of oppressors, merciful persons, and restorers of that which was ill gotten; and of profane, holy: and so to be converted, as that we might say of them, compared to the best servants of God, the lamb and the lion do eat together.

But to let these go, as too gross, I would wish such to weigh these Scriptures aright; who will take no nay but that they belong to God's election, when yet their goodness is as the morning dew, soon vanishing and blown away; or as a cake half baken. Let them see how well this becometh them, to be sometime forward, sometime backward: in some things, zealous, and yielding to the will of God: in othersome, sinning against their own knowledge: and when they be straying from duty, to make no haste to it again; neither to see that anything is amiss in them: nay to be put in mind, and reproved, though never so justly, and kindly, they cannot bear it. It must in no ways be denied them, that they believe, and are sure to be saved: but

where is the spirit which S. Paul speaketh of, in those which know themselves saved? Which, as an husband, ruleth and beareth sway, which commandeth holy and heavenly motions and affections into the heart, not suffering poisoned, and earthly corruptions to defile the same? Where is that authority and government over the members of the mind and body, as over a wife, that they may be well ordered? Where are the trains and companies of all sorts of good fruits, as their children? And comely ornaments also, and beautiful to adorn and set out their lives? When a professor of the Gospel shall not be able to deny, that his heart is corrupt, by fretting, raging, and unquietness for every small trifle, and yet not once trembling for it, nor saying, what have I done? Or else loose, vain, and foolish by other occasions, and all this without repentance. Where is his testimony, that his heart is a good treasury, and nursery of good things? When his tongue shall be walking, not only unnecessarily, and idly, but in unsavory and offensive speech, in foolish jesting, taunting, railing, mocking, lying, swearing, slandering, curish and churlish speaking; how are the powers and members of the body in subjection, as a wife unto the power of Christ, which ruleth as an husband, in the heart of God's beloved ones? Where is those men's religion, which S. James boldly saith is none, where the tongue is thus ungoverned, what show soever be made thereof?

And so I might go forward to convince many of our countrymen, who have often heard me, and other of God's Ministers urging them after the same manner, in our Sermons: and do know, I tell them the truth, that such things are in them indeed, who yet seem to be religious. I have said it oft, and now say it with grief, that all these, who have such things reigning in them, are not only their own enemies, but also to our preaching of the Gospel of Christ: neither is their rejoicing good, who glory in their faith and hope, when yet they are thus earthly and carnally minded.

They must know it (howsoever they believe) that God hath joined with faith, virtue, and godliness, patience, temperance; and that who so believeth, is thereby turned from his old conversation. For mine own part, I have long misliked this haste, and sudden shows of great repentance in men, who in their first acquaintance with the word preached to them, have not only professed that they have repented (when besides some gripes of grief, they have not known what repentance meaneth) but they have thought themselves able almost on the sudden to censure, yea to condemn other, and teach them; and so although with boldness enough joined with as much ignorance, they have taken in hand to do. I speak not of such as are humbled in their hearts for their sin, who desire nothing more than to be set at liberty from the fear which oppressteth them, learning daily to believe, and to be grounded therein; who dare no otherwise believe their sins forgiven them, then they walk humbly before God and men: but of such as pass from sorrow for sin without faith, to newness of life, as they imagine, which was never, nor ever shall be attained; leaving the learning of faith, and assurance of God's favor, which is the beginning, and worker of all new life, as a thing soon gotten: and therefore it is so slightly labored for of them, and so to seek with then, for want of thorough proving whether they have it or no, that many are driven again to seek for it, many years after, they thought they had been sure of it, yea and (that which is more to be lamented) many of them never attain unto it at all. It standeth with no sound reason, that young beginners in learning of any trade, should by and by, become occupiers, and setters up; or that they should rule well, who have never learned to obey: so it standeth not with religion, that they should count themselves good Christians, or that they should be so indeed, who have not tasted of Christ, and the benefit thereof; neither learned him, as the truth is in him, that is, to put off the old man with his affections and lusts, and to put on the

new: and who have not felt him so good and bountiful to them, that for his sake they be ready to do anything.

This I have spoken by occasion of the matter in hand; namely, that faith bringeth always with it new life; in so much, that when it is overmatched with the fleshly corruption, yet it raiseth sighing's and strivings in the heart till it be subdued, that I might at least prevail with some of my brethren, that they please not themselves in thinking they have faith, when their lives are filled, not only with many offensive actions; but also with custom and commons in the same: whereas he which is honored with the title of God's servant, must be known by the livery of uncorrupt life, and prove by his savor and smell of good conversation, that he came from God, and is not of the earth, that so he may show himself to be a man of God indeed: his roots must be fastened as the trees of Lebanon: he must flourish as the Lily, and find the graces of God as dew to quicken them. For of this be we sure, that whatsoever men allege, why their lives cannot bear the mold and print of sound doctrine, and yet they will needs go for the approved servants of God; it is a strong delusion which persuadeth them so.

And therefore seeing the Scripture doth (as I have said) so fully, and so often set down this truth unto us, that such as have obtained mercy of God, are taught and guided by him: ought not men to settle themselves to another course, then in times past they walked in, being now delivered from so great bondage? For to that end, as they have heard, they were delivered. Wherefore, if any be assured of salvation, let them either willingly be subject to the Lord's yoke, I mean his commandments, and commit their whole life to him to be governed, and be diligent to do good works; or else let them hold their peace: for they are nothing less, as in time it shall appear, and hath done already in many such as they are, to their cost: and be they

well assured, that God will not be slack to revenge such boldness. But I will shut up this matter in one sentence. Saint Paul to the Ephesians most lively describeth this life, which is to be led of them which are sure of God's favor: saying, Put off, or lay aside, as concerning your conversation past, that old man, that is, that corrupt nature; and so the powers of your mind and body, which were infected with deceivable lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, (even where the force of reason should be greatest) that so you may put on the new man which is to be sanctified, that the powers of your bodies and minds may be renewed, and changed also: so shall ye be framed, to bring forth righteousness, and true holiness, wherein ye shall carry some resemblance of God.

### **CHAP. 3.**

That for the leading of a godly life, is required faith in the temporal promises of God, and hearty assent and credit to the commandments also, and threatening's in the word of God, as well as faith to be saved.

Now I have showed, that true justifying faith and a godly life, must of necessity go together, and that the one cannot be without the other: I will go to the second point in this first general head or part; and prove that it is necessary to the leading of a godly life, to believe and give credit to the whole doctrine of the word of God, to be led and guided thereby, as well as to have faith in the promises of salvation, and forgiveness of sins. This I say therefore, that he which believeth in Christ to salvation, must not stay himself and rest therein only, as though he were given unto us of his father to be our righteousness only, and to make for us a way to eternal life: but to be our wisdom also, to make us wise; our sanctification, to make us holy, and also

our redemption and deliverance, to rid us in his good time, from all calamities and miseries, which here befall us: This, he that truly believeth, must be persuaded of: and that all the promises of this life, and of the life to come, which serve to confirm him in obedience (whether the great and principal, as of the graces of the spirit; or the smaller, as of bodily safety and preservation from dangers, so far as they shall be good for him) do belong unto him.

And beside both these, he must believe, that both all the commandments which teach obedience, and the threatening's, because they restrain the contrary, are set down for him particularly, as well as for any other, to bind his conscience thereunto: these also, I say, must he believe, according to that of Saint Paul: Whatsoever things are written aforetime (as either promises, threats or commandments) they are written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. So that he is bound to depend upon this word of God, written in the canonical Scriptures, and to build his faith thereon (in such wise, that he dares jeopard his soul upon the truth and doctrine of them) even as he is to look for salvation, only by our Lord Jesus Christ: ever counting that for sin, which shall be found to jar or jangle with the same, either in his heart or life.

But though all, who have hope to be saved, should do this; yet it is manifest, they do not. They make not conscience of many sins: they look not to many promises; they fear not many threats: all which do much testify against them, that they be not so well fenced, as they might be: and by means hereof, they hold even the promise of salvation itself more weakly. And this cometh to pass the more commonly, that they be no better stablished and rooted in the truth to believe it, because these things (as they be worthiest and most excellent) so they be not plainly, soundly, and thoroughly beaten into

the people, and that again and again, till they that are willing, have them for their own. And another cause is, for that the people, who have some taste of this doctrine, namely, how they should join good life with their faith, take not pain, when they have been well taught them, to call them to mind and digest them: only they have pieces and fragments of many good points, but rarely it shall be found, that one Christian among many groweth to see this, which I now speak of, by teaching; much less hath it in use and practice for his own: that is, to give credit to one part of the word as well as to another; and not everyone to take that which liketh him.

And therefore when they have some work of true faith in them; yet they see not how to set upon repentance, and a godly life: how to begin, and how to proceed therein, but are off, and on, now forward, then backward, and scarcely at any time settled and stayed: the which although it be so, in great part through their own weakness, yet is it also in respect of their ignorance: I speak of the better sort of people, and such as have received the first fruits of the spirit. Whereas, if they were persuaded that they ought to make conscience of all sound doctrine that they hear, and to give assent to every part of the word of God, and submit themselves thereto, promises, threats and commandments; they should hold more firmly the persuasion of their salvation, and also be better prepared how to fly evil, and how to do duty, and how to trust God in all kinds of his promises. Therefore it is said to the Hebrews: To us was the Gospel preached as also unto them: but the word that they heard, profited not them, because it was not mixed with faith in those that heard it. Again, Without faith, it is impossible to please God. With the which agreeth that which is written by S. Paul to the Romans: Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin: that is, whatsoever we do, not being persuaded in our consciences, that we please God in doing of it, we sin against him. Now then, when our judgments be not settled in this doctrine and



truth, and consequently, we follow no such rule in our actions, must we not needs wander up and down the more unprofitably and heavily; or, when we be at the best, must we not needs be doubtful and uncertain, whether we please God or no? Whereas our chief care should be, least we do anything which might crease or crack our faith: especially, when it is tender and weak, and like the bruised reed, which is easily broken.

Therefore if any believe to be saved, let them believe also that they shall be sanctified (for with one and the same faith we believe both) and that they shall receive grace from God to bring forth fruits of amendment of life, and that they shall be made able by him through the hearing of the holy Scriptures, to cast off their old conversation. This faith much availeth to the furthering of the dear children of God in a godly course, even at their first coming unto God, as it doth always after, to live by it. And although God by the same spirit regenerateth them, by the which he assureth them of their adoption: yet is it wrought in them much more hardly, and in greater fear, when they do not first know and be persuaded in their judgments, that it shall be so. And though it can be but weak in any, at their first conversion to God, yet shall they sooner wade through their doubts, and grow out of their fear, if they have this faith as a foundation to uphold them, and encourage them to go about it: But otherwise, they shall faint and fear oft times, and be without hope (nothing is more clear then this, if we observe it in weak Christians.) And thus must they be persuaded also concerning all blessing, good success, deliverance out of troubles, or patience and meekness to bear them, as well as to believe the forgiveness of sins: and finally, whatsoever God saith in his word, either the forbidding of any sin, or the requiring of any duty, they are bound to believe it as the truth of God; to depend upon it, and to be built upon it: and to trust him upon his bare word, and to suffer themselves to be led by it (and that

because it is his word) having in them always a settled purpose to do so: and this is called by the Apostle, the obedience of faith. For they must be resolved of this, that to whom God gives Christ, to them also he gives all things needful for this life, and the life to come, in and by Christ.

And thus Noah did not only believe that he was made heir of righteousness; but also, that he and certain of his household should be saved in the flood: and Abraham likewise believed not only, that he was justified, but also went to a place which he knew not, only seeing God commanded; and abode in the land of promise, as in a strange country; and believed, that he should have a son in his old age. And they who believed among the Israelites in the Savior which was to come, of whom Moses, though darkly, had taught before: the same believed other promises, as that the walls of Jericho should fall down, after they had been compassed about seven days. Many other such examples, who showed themselves not only to believe the promise of forgiveness of sins, and of eternal life, but also other temporal promises; yea and precepts also and threats, which God had set down in his word, very profitable for us, to this purpose: many such (I say) both throughout the Scriptures; and namely, in that eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, are set down unto us. And this general faith, (so called, for that it giveth assent and credit to the word of God, in the elect, as well to one part as to another, with an honest heart ready to obey it) even this faith (I say) must be planted in them, as well as faith to be saved, because by it, as well as by this, God's people must live afterwards, and be upholden.

And this doctrine, because it is occupied about the promises of this life, and the commandments of God, which are to guide us to full sanctification here, I did not therefore join it with my discourse of faith in the former treatise; but referred it to this place as the fittest,

where I teach how to live godly: to the attaining whereof, the believing, that I have spoken of, is a special help and furtherance. And so I wish the Christian reader to mark well that which I say about this matter: for it is one of the hardest points in all Christianity to practice, and one of the darkest to conceive and see into, and to be rightly persuaded of, and settled in: and a point in deed less stood upon and taught and made clear by Preachers themselves, in their Sermons and Catechizing's; and yet our living by faith, throughout our whole life, which is the fruit of it, is as plainly taught and brought to light in the Scriptures, as any need to desire it: and namely in those places to the Hebrews and the Galatians: one, The just shall live by faith: the other, I live no longer, but Christ in me, and the life that I lead is by faith in the son of God. As if they both should say; Christ by his spirit doth draw his faithful ones to be led and guided by the word of truth which he hath set down to them: and they desire no other life, then that which there they are moved and persuaded unto, whether we mean the commandments or promises.

I said that this believing which I speak of, is not much laid open in public teaching, but only this (which is the effect of it) that we ought to be obedient to the word of God: and therefore it is, that the forwarder sort of good hearers (except some few, who have been thoroughly made acquainted with it, and exercised in it by long experience) do little see into it: namely, that they may undoubtedly be persuaded, that God will make them able to obey his will, as they are fit to reach unto it: and that he hath promised, if they once come to know that they are beloved of him, that he will afterwards be with them (to quicken their will, and draw their affections, and strengthen them to do their duties:) as it was said by the Angel to Mary, Hail, thou that art freely beloved, the Lord is with thee. Many of God's dear children, when they are somewhat stayed about the assurance of their salvation, after that they have been long laboring about it,

and then come to hear that they must lead new lives; many of them (I say) are willing to go about it: but they are much discouraged, because they see not how they shall be able. And least any should object, that Paul himself was so troubled, who said, To will, is present with me; but I find no means to perform that which is good: I answer, he complained not of that which I do; that is, that he had no hope in God, nor no promise of strength from him to perform: for he said the contrary in sundry places. I am able to do all things through the help of Christ which strengtheneth me. And again, I live no longer, but Christ in me: but he complained, that for all the hope of help that he had, yet the rebellion of his flesh, and nature that was unreformed, did mightily resist him. And this hindrance he had, and we all shall have while we live. But what is that to this, that besides this rebellion of the old man, they have this also to hinder them: that they cannot tell, whether they shall have strength to make them able, or no: nor whether God have given them any promise, that their burden shall be made light: and that Christ himself will bear the greatest part of it for them, that so it may be made easy?

This it is, that killeth the heart of right good Christians, when they are ignorant of it, and when they be not well grounded in it, and thoroughly persuaded of it, that God will make them able and fit for so great a work, as the leading of a godly life is: even like the burden of the Israelites, who were enjoined their task of brick that they had made in times past, (which work was hard enough) and yet themselves to seek and provide their straw. This, I am sure, hath troubled many, who yet were willing and ready to do any duties required of them, and hath been the cause why they have gone about the several actions of their life, the bearing of their trouble, and the offering up of their prayers, the more deadly and uncheerfully; and therefore the more awkwardly and wearisomely.

And for the benefit of many good souls, I will say that which hath been acknowledged unto me, by sundry well approved Christians, when I have in conference set down plainly to them the point which now I write of: namely, how necessary it is to believe in general, whatsoever other promises or precepts in the word of God, as well as the promises of salvation by Christ. Oh, have many said, if we could have helped up our selves, out of distrust, fear, and uncomfortable dumps, by applying the promises of God concerning grace necessary for us, outward deliverance from dangers, and good success in our lawful dealings of this life; we might with much ease and peace have stayed up our selves, when for want thereof, we were sore plunged, and almost fainted: and with half the toil which we used for it, we might have upholden ourselves in hope and with comfort. For many hours, yea and sometime days, we have beat our brains and reasoned to and fro with heavy hearts, how to wade through some afflictions, and how to be contented with some accidents which were like to fall out and come to pass: and this we did, because we missed of the right way of trusting to God's providence, that he would turn all to the best: without which resolution, who can quietly rest in any uncertainties here below? So effectual and good a mean it is, to be led by faith, and to have it as a daily companion with us. By which we having persuasion of the greatest benefit of all other, namely Christ: we might the more easily have assured ourselves (we see now) of any smaller, whether any trouble, to have a good issue out of it; or any good thing (as it should have been expedient for us) to enjoy it. And we may say truly, we know nothing to have been the cause of so much and so long unprofitableness and heaviness these many years, as this: that we have not been rooted and grounded in faith, as we have had a care to please God. For we being subtly undermined by Satan to hold in this error of unbelief (although we see manifestly that the seed of faith was in us) it was the cause why in all other good things we went forward the more slightly. So that we see great cause

to season our hearts with believing throughout our whole life, whatsoever labor it cost us. To this purpose was the speech of those Christians.

And to go forward, who doth not know, that when some certainty of salvation is attained of men, yet for all that, in as much as it is but weak, that they have many heart griefs for this, that they see they have a long wearisome pilgrimage to go thorough; and little knowledge and persuasion of any great guiding of them through all the fears and difficulties of it? Pity therefore the distressed estate of God's poor people, ye shepherds of his flock. Although this is but one point of many which ye are to teach them: and arm yourselves with that mind, which was in the Apostle: who saw it meet as long as he should abide in this tabernacle, to put the people in mind of all things necessary to salvation from day today, though they knew and were stablished in them. And let me with your patience, say one thing more to you, which if ye will be advised by me, will be much to your own benefit, and of those that hear you. Above all things, seek to have that your own and effectually wrought in yourselves, which you teach the people (for you know that the Physicians who practice by experience, are best able to deal with their patients). Especially in this matter of faith, labor to be more exercised: how you have use of it, in believing for your own parts, either precepts or promises, and content not yourselves with bare knowledge of the truth. And so doing, ye shall make good gain of that which you shall teach, if your hearers should not: and yet such teaching, while ye be sure that it hath done yourselves much good, shall set such an edge on your doctrine by your more lively, cheerful, and powerful delivering of it, that it shall far more easily procure an appetite in the people to receive it, as they did in John Baptists time with greediness, and as it were with violence; and so, that if they be not brought to the true

practice of Christianity by it, they will not be brought to it by any other teaching.

And this I wish, that ye be not of the mind that some have been of (for it is no opinion fit for the Minister of God) that is to say, that they think, though some preach by experience, yet no man is bound to do so: as though it were in men's choice to do which they list; when we know, that the good shepherd doth go before the sheep, and they follow him: And if he go before them in example of good life, then he cannot choose but teach them by experience, that which he himself doth practice in his good example. And so, he that shall think that he is not bound to teach by experience, as well as by the letter, concludeth that he is not bound to be a good man himself, who teacheth.

Now I have said what I purposed, I will go forward. In teaching, labor much in this manner, which I have mentioned, to beat into the people, (with making it plain to them, how they may be assured of their salvation, as I have taught in the first treatise) beat in (I say) this doctrine of believing, that God will minister all help to enable them to live godly. For in both points (if view might be taken throughout this dominion) it should be found that the people are ignorant and to seek; both how to come to the assurance of salvation, and also how they should be rightly taught to lead a godly and a Christian life. And how cometh this to pass, but because men teach not oft (of which all may see what need there is) or else they do not in commiseration of the people's weak capacity and memory, beat upon these things among all other again and again. So S. Paul hath left behind him his practice for our instruction, saying: It grieveth me not to write (when he cannot come to preach them) the same things to you, and for you, it is a sure thing. And we should know, that it is no shame to preach the same things oft, yea in our own

congregation; but meet and fit (especially if they be these special matters) unless we contend for the vain praise of men, and will show our pride by seeking after novelty, rather than our desire of the people's edifying. Yet I nourish not barbarousness, nor the uttering unseasonably and unsavorily either of the same words and sentences, or in bosom Sermons, the same things: but in the evidence of the spirit, and in renewing our labor and pain, even about the same doctrine which we taught before, it shall be so far from being wearisome and tedious, that the best hearers shall affirm that they cannot hear them too oft, but desire with all their hearts to hear them again.

And because I am by fit occasion come to utter this, I will add one thing which ought worthily to prevail much both with Preacher and people. And that is this: that in this long and gracious time of peace and liberty, of free preaching the Gospel, he is a rare private man (that I go no further) who is able, plainly and soundly to set down, how a sinner may know himself to be in the state of salvation, and assured that he is the child of God; and when he is so, how he should bring forth the fruits of repentance, and lead a godly and Christian life. I know it is the holy Ghost, who alone can work this in men's hearts, but I speak of the expressing and setting down the same. And though I doubt not but that some conceive it, yet if they did that well, they could in some sort utter it also: as we are commanded to take unto us words to express that which we conceive; as well as to have matter in our minds. And although the knowledge of this in general, do bring men in liking with it: yet who seeth not, that the particular unfolding hereof, by fit coherences knitting one point with another, is the way to make it understood and conceived aright? By the which the hearer is far more easily brought to have the effectual work thereof in him.



And thus to return again to that from whence I digressed not unnecessarily, and so to draw to an end about it: Although people profit thus far that they get some true taste of salvation by preaching; yet they shall very much stagger and go back, and coldly set upon the practice of godliness, if they be not well grounded in believing, that God will build them up more strongly from day today, and perfect the good work in them which he hath begun, even to full sanctification in the fear of God. If a chief and main post in a building be wanting, will not the whole house be soon shaken? So if a Christian, who must reform his life, go about it, not believing that God will make him able; he may be sure he shall want a main help hereto, even that which will go nigh to pull down all that is set up. For if he have not faith, to believe that God will strengthen him; what strength hath he but his own? Which is as fit for such a work to bring it to pass, as a child is to build a great Castle by his skill. But if he be well settled in this confidence (his heart also being purified and changed; which (as we shall hear afterwards) is necessarily required; he shall go about it with cheerfulness and readiness; he shall be encouraged to pray as his necessities shall give cause; he shall be kept from fainting and dismayedness, when his strength is not very great, and rise up again when he is fallen: all which shall be great means in such a case to uphold him, and set him forward to depend upon God, without any great unsettling of him (and yet shall he not for all this, be without sense and feeling of his infirmities:) which another as willing to obey God as he, shall never be able to do; but every while cast down and dismayed, until he get the same furniture. And this must here be marked, that there shall be the better proceeding herein, of every weak Christian, as his knowledge shall be greater in the word of God: which before grace came (as fire to the stubble to kindle and set it a work to burn) although it were idle and unprofitable in him, and lay void, and unoccupied, as timber lieth by, till the building go forward: yet it shall then help much to the leaving

of evil, and the doing of good, especially after experience in time, shall be joined to both. And when all these meet together in an upright hearted Christian, how weak soever, if he acquaint himself familiarly with the promises of eternal life, and treasure up in a good conscience the certainty of the forgiveness of sins from day today: then this is he who hath laid a strong foundation of a godly life, upon which it shall be no hard matter to set the building of his life suitable and proportionable afterwards: so that, although the rain fall, and the floods come, and the wind blow, and beat upon that house, yet it shall not fall; for it is built on a rock. But he who layeth not this foundation, but buildeth on the sand, shall soon his building turned over. And thus the case standeth with many in these days, who therefore are cast down oft times from their good beginnings, because they had not skill to make them more substantial and sure. And I fear not to affirm (the Lord witnessing to that which I say) that the offensive lives of many, with many starting's aside from the good way which they have entered into, and the crooked and halting steppes that they make grossly in the sight of men, who yet durst not sometime before quench the spirit in themselves, not hurt their tender consciences secretly in the sight of God: these (I say) are chiefly from hence, that they laid not the foundation aright, nor made not their first entrance into a Christian life, sound and sure. Among other things, they have failed for the most part in this, of which I do most specially speak in this place, that they have not been built up in this faith and persuasion, that God will further their weak beginnings, and fortify their hearts against the stumbling blocks and discouragements, which shall stand up in their way. I have now only showed that this faith should be in a Christian, when he first setteth on a godly life: but how it should accompany him after throughout his life, that so he may live by it, being the same to the whole life that the eye is to the body, I shall in place fit for it, if God will, declare and show so far as shall be expedient.

## CHAP. 4.

Of the heart, and how it should be cleansed and changed, and so the whole man which is true sanctification, tending to repentance and a godly life.

And now that I have showed, that true godliness cometh from faith which justifieth, and that the one cannot be without the other; and that with the same faith we must believe all other his promises also, made to his children; and all doctrine that doth instruct us to obedience: I will go forward. Now therefore, to the end, the beauty of the godly life may be seen in some sort, and that the believer may be able to practice it, and know that he doth so: I will, as I propounded, speak of the heart: which is the second general head in this treatise, and the next to be handled, according to the division made in the first chapter. And thus I will speak of it: first showing, that it must be renewed and changed; and then (in place fit) that it must be kept so afterwards: for both are necessary to the believer. And when he is resolved to be guided by God's word in all things, as he hath been taught before, and so to live by faith, and then hath an heart fit to yield itself to do so: who doth not see, that the work is in good forwardness (to live godly) and (as we say) by such a good entrance and beginning, half at an end?

Here therefore understand and know, that the heart which is the fountain from whence the practice of godliness must grow and come, ought to be purged and cleansed: and consequently, the body itself, ought to be first made a fit instrument for the same (to the accomplishing of that which is good, and to the well ordering of the life) in which two, consisteth the sanctification of the whole man: We must thus be changed before we can will well, or live well: even as a filthy and unsavory vessel must be well and thoroughly seasoned,

before it can be put to use and occupied: and we must hate sin with a deadly hatred, and have the power of it abated in us, and love goodness and righteousness, and be renewed in them before we can bring forth fruits of repentance and amendment of life. But to the end we may see it more necessary, that this change and sanctification of the heart should be wrought, and also what an excellent grace and gift of God it is; it shall be meet to lay forth the nature and disposition of the heart: what it is since the fall of our first parents in itself, and of itself, before there be any work of grace in it, and before the most exquisite cunning and workmanship of the holy Ghost in reforming and renewing thereof, be showed upon it. And when we have seen into it, know we that as is the heart; so is the life, both before the cleansing and change of it, and after. And according to the proverb, like tree, like fruit: for a good man, out of the good treasury of his heart, bringeth forth good things: and the wicked man out of the ill treasury of his heart, bringeth forth evil things. This heart of man therefore must be good, and holy, and pure: it must be brought to yield, and submit it self willingly to better instruction, then naturally it hath been acquainted with; that so it may bring forth fruit of amendment of life, and be readily disposed unto every good work.

But (as I said) that men may not deceive themselves, who for the most part being ignorant about the heart, and the nature and properties of it, do think that they may live godly, whatsoever corruption doth infect the heart; it shall be requisite to know it better, and how all godliness is but fantasy or hypocrisy, unto the heart be reformed and changed. We must have it cleansed and well-seasoned, and afterwards kept so, that it may be no longer an enemy to us, or a hinderer of us, in any of our good actions: but contrarily, that by the help of it, we may daily go forward in well doing; at least by striving, or after a repulse, to return again. For this we are to

know, that the heart of man before it be emptied, is a dungeon of iniquity: before it be enlightened, a den of darkness, before it be cleansed, a puddle of filthiness: and that which Saint James speaketh of the tongue, may much more be said of the heart, that before it be tamed, it is an unruly evil.

If then such a heart be the guide of our life, how monstrous, and loathsome must that life needs be? Hereby therefore it is clear, that the heart must be purged of this corruption, as I have said: it must be changed from this nature and custom; that when any departing from sin should be, or any duty to God offered, this may not be a pullback, and hinderer, but ready to give consent thereunto; and a furtherer thereof, in subduing the corruption of the same, from time to time. For who seeth not that this were otherwise a toile most tedious, yea, a thing altogether impossible; as oft as we should go about any good duty, then to have our heart to seek (as they say) and to be set in frame: as if an husbandman should always be driven to mend and sharpen his plough share, when, and as oft as he tilleth the ground; or a Carpenter to grind his tools so oft as he goeth to work: but much more, seeing the heart is backward, and not willing, and ready to any good thing, yea rather rebellious against it; must not all of necessity the more preposterously go forward? But to proceed, more particularly to anatomize and describe the heart, and in few words to say much of it; we must know that it is overspread with unbelief, deceitful, unruly, loose, hardened, willful, vain, idle, blockish, cold in goodness, and without savor, and soon weary of it: high, big, proud, disdainful, self-loving, uncharitable, unkind, conceited, impatient, angry, fierce, envious, revenging, unmerciful, froward and touchy, churlish, sullen, meddling, worldly, filthy and unclean, loving pleasure more than godliness; unprofitable, repining, earthly, greedy, or covetous; idolatrous, superstitious, irreverent, hypocritical, disobedient to betters, judging rashly, hardly

reconciled: and in a word, prone to all evil: is it not then hardly tamed? Which must needs be granted, when the most part of people under the Gospel, do either not know, nor suspect this, and therefore are far from ability to hunt these corruptions out: and they who know it, do yet love them as their own flesh, and therefore be never the nearer to the purging out, or removing of them.

It is not without cause therefore, that Solomon saith, there are seven abominations in the heart, that is many. And Jeremiah in like manner affirmeth, that the heart of man is deceitful and deep above all things: who can gage or search it out? Even I the Lord (saith God) am the searcher or finder out of it. Therefore also our Savior to set out the nature of the heart, saith: Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, slanders. Must it not then needs be a filthy sinkhole, out of which so unsavory stinks do arise? So that it may truly be said, the heart of man is evil above measure: and in the kinds thereof, in number as the sparkles that come out of the furnace; and as the sand of the sea shore, which is innumerable. And what should I say more? The time would be too short to proceed further, and I shall have occasion, in another place, to speak of the same. But by the way, this is worthily to be lamented, that where the Scripture is so plentiful in describing and setting out of the manifold and foul defilements of the heart, that men are so blind in understanding them; and see so little, when the holy Ghost bewrayeth so much. And hereof it is, that they fear so little danger, and suspect so little hurt to be coming towards them thereby, in the midst of so great and just cause to fear and suspect both. For who is merrier or more secure, than he that hath most sin in his heart to witness against him? Which being so, who doth not see that such a draft-house is to be emptied, and that much grace and water of life had need to be poured in, to sweeten and season it, before it be fit to be employed to good use, and to be made a temple

for the holy Ghost to dwell in, and a good treasury, that out of it, a good man may bring forth good things? Yea, an admirable thing it is, that it should ever be brought to good.

But to go forward now, to show what this purging of the heart is, and how it should be purged. For the first, we must know, that it is a renewing in holiness and righteousness by little and little, of all true believers, they being first delivered and freed from the tyranny of sin, and fear of damnation: for a man is no sooner set at liberty from the fear of everlasting death, and the wrath of God, but he is also sensibly drawn to let go his hold, and interest in sin, which before he had; and feeleth the same to receive a deadly wound in him, and the power thereof to be abated and crucified: And so, findeth that verified in him which the Apostle setteth down to the Romans; that is to say, How can such as are dead to sin, live any longer therein? And withal, he is quickened and sensibly stirred up to a love and earnest desire of things holy and heavenly, even that he may please God; and being renewed in the spirit of his mind, doth affect and long after righteousness and true holiness. And herein consisteth this purging and changing of the heart, which I now speak of, and such a thing it is, showing itself by a hatred of sin, and a delighting in goodness. Which no power nor will of man can effect: for it is an enemy thereto.

And although this new change be not such, as that it is able to bear down all the old corruption, that reigned in him sometime, and to entertain holy things only: yet it is a mighty alteration, that goodness hath any place in him in truth, which was before so far from him, and sin and evil hunted out in will, and desire, which alone bare sway before. For there is (without question) the first fruit of the spirit, which will afterwards bring forth an increase of the same for continuance: which work of grace and sanctification (if he in whom it is wrought should not live to show forth any further fruit of it) is an

infallible mark of God's election and love towards him, and can no more be in a reprobate, then light can be in the belly and bowels of the earth. But if any will demand, what becometh of this grace in time; because it is too clear, that it is not only dimmed, but even choked also in many, in whom it began to shine and give light: such must understand, that God doth strengthen and continue this grace of holiness and sanctification, as it is nourished, esteemed, and set by; and as men do stir it up in themselves by asking after it, when they miss it, and provoke themselves to pray for such good affections, and cannot be satisfied without them. As David did often, sometime one way, and sometime another: Why art thou heavy, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? Also, praise thou the Lord (O my soul) and all that is within thee, praise his holy name. And thus, and by the like means, we shall cherish our sparkles, which (as the fire is blown up with bellows) shall not ordinarily fail us, not be extinguished in us, especially for any long time, (except in time of temptation, or when melancholy oppresseth us) unless through our default and folly. Thus understand what it is, to have the heart purged and changed, that thereby it may be fit to set upon a godly life.

The next thing is, how this is done; and how it cometh to pass, that men after they have received the grace of justifying faith, do find and perceive in themselves such an alteration from that which was before? Even as if a benumbing cold should be on the sudden turned into a glowing and burning heat. I say, this is the proper and wonderful work of God: who mortifying our worldly lusts and evil desires in us by his holy spirit, doth reform us, and create this holiness and sanctification in us. He it is, S. Luke saith, that purifieth our hearts. He kindleth good affections, and subdueth the contrary in us. There is no other besides him in heaven, who can work it: much less on earth that can set his hand to it. Which if that man of sin had



duly considered, he would not have arrogated to himself a greater work than it, (which also is inseparable from it) namely, the authority of forgiving sins. The Lord (I say) by his holy spirit, it is, who stirreth up in our hearts godly motions and good desires: namely, of knowledge, good government, fear of him, communion with him and his people, the desire of spiritual rejoicing, and strength against infernal foes, and such like: which good affections when they be kindled in us, he suffereth not to vanish away, but teacheth us to feed and nourish them by reading, meditation, and prayer. And the spirit of the Lord which raiseth up and worketh in us these holy affections, is therefore described by these most excellent titles: for it is called the spirit of wisdom, strength, fear of the Lord, &c.

And this he doth to his dear children, when they are first brought to this happy change (even in their first entering into the estate of grace) to the end they may loathe, as stinking garments, the old custom, in which they had long lien; I mean, the unsavory draff of their own cogitations, desires, and lusts of their hearts: the least danger whereof, was this, that they deceived them. These, when they see what variety there is of better matter to season and occupy their minds and hearts withal, they do shun and fly from, as one that had escaped the loathsome prison, doth cry out when he must be brought back to it again. And although I deny not, but that they must hold and retain the savor and smell of their old filthiness and profaneness, which in times past, as bands and chains, did keep them in captivity: yet is not their condition, for all that, to be counted mean and little worth, because they have not full deliverance from it, but happy and highly to be judged of, in that they have obtained deliverance in part, and do see how they may be partakers of a far better.

I speak now but of the beginning of a Christians change, when he can discern no more in himself then this, namely, that he hath with faith unfeigned, a heart sanctified, and purified from his natural corruption and wicked disposition. And without regard of the fruit hereof, even the whole work of Christianity, which shall follow this happy beginning (then the which, he desireth and longeth after nothing more) the weak Christian, that hath his part in this, thinks himself, even for this exceedingly indebted to God. True it is, that no man is to stay and abide in this estate, but is to proceed further, even to repentance, which cometh from it; as hereafter shall be seen. But yet seeing the cleansing and purging of the heart, at the first conversion of a sinner, is a distinct work of the spirit, and in man but the beginning of all the work of Christianity, which shall follow it; I would not pass it over in silence: and the rather I say so, because it is but darkly and confusedly seen into and discerned. And although it be but as the grain of Mustard seed, in comparison of the tree itself, to the full growth and perfect age in Christ: yet is it in possibility, nay in certain and sure hope, even the same, and already of the nature of it; and therefore hath part of the reward also. And now it tarrieth but for further building up in knowledge and grace, that so it may appear to other, as it is in itself, the estate of a regenerate person, and new borne unto God.

But for all this which I have said of this matter, namely, both what this change of the heart is, and how it is wrought by God's spirit, yet one thing is wanting, which the diligent reader will desire to know: That is, why the Scripture saith, that although it be God which purifieth the heart, yet that it is ascribed to faith; their hearts were purified by faith, saith S. Luke: And S. John (which is little difference) attributes it to hope, saying, he that hath this hope, purgeth himself: To this I will speak somewhat at large, seeing it is a point of great moment and weight. It is true indeed, that our hearts

are made new, and purged by faith: we knowing thereby ourselves to be made the beloved of God. For it is faith in the precious promises of God which the holy Ghost worketh in us (whereby we fly the corruptions that are in the world through lust) and which purgeth the heart, casting out the druff and filthiness which was in us. And until our minds be thus enlightened that we see clearly that our sins are forgiven us, and we united to Christ, and made one with him, and partakers of the graces of his spirit; we never come out of ourselves, neither have any desire to heavenly things: but our wisdom is earthly, devilish, and sensual.

For we being not yet assured of the happiness of heaven, do know no better delights, then our blind and deceitful hearts do dream of here on earth. The which though we see by experience, that they are short and momentary (seeing they who have greatest part in them, cannot keep them long) yet we, who have least part in them, will never forgo the love of them, until we see how we may certainly enjoy better (which may clearly be seen in the poorer sort of people destitute of grace, that although they have no wealth, yet it doth their hearts good to talk of it, in token that it is the thing which they love best of all). And hereof it is, that many thousands, through ignorance, pass their time in sport, play, pastime and pleasure: accounting that the only life that is to be wished, to live deliciously for a season. Others, in quarrelling, contention, murmuring, debate, suites, and accusing of their neighbors: The most tolerable, and honest course seemeth to be the spending of men's years, in, and about the worldly goods. And thus are men occupied, although one sort diversely from another, yet all to be pitied, seeing they walk amiss: I speak of such as know no better. Notwithstanding, no one of these can be brought to mislike his course, or to turn his heart and delight from it, until he be assured of a far better portion. No, although we bring tidings hereof unto them, so as they believe that it is true, and have great liking of

the same: yet, till they see that it may be their own, they will not so much as go about the dispossessing of such unsavory and fond lusts from their hearts. But when they believe that God is a plentiful rewarder of all that seek him, and that they who were once no people, are now freely made his people, and beloved of him, which were sometime not beloved: then their hearts turn, and ask after him: then they desire to know more of his will and mind: and repent that they were so ignorant before, and that so long time; and that they drunk up the draff of unsavory puddles, even deceitful pleasures, when they might have drunk of the sweet cisterns which were able to refresh their souls with the water of life. And although there are many doubting's before they be settled in this persuasion, and assured of better delights: yet they are no sooner resolved of their salvation, and what liberties they have by Christ, whereby they are made happy (which how it is attained, hath been showed in the former treatise) but so soon are their evil hearts and affections changed, so far as the judgment is enlightened, and they contrarily affected to that sin, which they liked before: as seeing now cause sufficient why they should do so; for they receive from Christ by his spirit both will and power thereunto. For faith worketh by love, and so causing them to love God, and for his sake their brethren, it maketh them also ready to do anything for him, whom they love; and therefore to avoid and cast off all allurements to evil, and sin, which he cannot abide.

So that it is faith which purifieth and changeth the heart, not as the chief and highest cause; for that is the holy Ghost (as hath been said) which at the same time, when it assureth us of our reconciliation with God, doth work this change and sanctification also: which is a purging of us from the corruption of our own nature, and an induing of us with a new quality, and disposition of mind, whereby we begin to will well, and sincerely to go about the things which please God:

and both by the merits and power of Christ's death and resurrection. Which I do advisedly mention again briefly, for the weaks sake, who shall (the point being somewhat hard to conceive) the better understand the one by the other. And these two, faith and a pure heart, clear and appease the conscience from accusation and checks, and work most sweet peace and holy security, Rom. 5:1. For from faith and a pure heart ariseth a good conscience, that is, a quiet and excusing conscience (even as true love to God and to our brethren proceedeth from both.) And these do set on work the will to hate sin, which before it loved: and contrariwise cause the affections, as fear, hope, love, joy, &c. to be well ordered, in such sort, as the whole man is carried thereby (even as the chariot on the wheels) agreeably: and the heart being thus renewed, doth work that glorious repentance in us (a thing much in speech amongst professors of the truth, but little in use or set by) being both a purpose of the heart, Act. 11:23, an inclination in the will, Psal. 119:44,57, and a continual endeavoring in the life Act. 24:16, to cast off all evil, and to obey God both inwardly and outwardly, according to the measure of knowledge in everyone: For when we are sanctified, we are delivered from the tyranny which sin had over us, into the liberty of the sons of God, to walk righteously, and obediently; that we receiving new increase of grace from Christ daily, may hold fast the same liberty unto our end.

This I have said, seeing it maketh way to the renouncing and forsaking of sinful life, and to the practicing of the contrary (of the which more shall be said anon) it so necessarily following the change of the heart: and for that the reader may the better see, that if he can find his heart to go with this doctrine, and that he hath a part in it; he may be assured, that all that I shall speak of hereafter, being of the same kind, and necessarily depending upon it, shall the more easily be received of him to his singular comfort: and that all men may see (whatsoever the wicked world doth glory of) that without this

effectual cleansing and purging the heart, there is no sound repentance, and currant and true fruits of amendment to be found amongst them.

And this though all true Christians cannot express, as I have set it down: yet the most simple, when they hear mention made of it, can affirm, that they find it so, to their no small consolation and contentment.

Now I having showed that the heart, and consequently the whole man must necessarily be changed and purged, before good life can come from it; and wherein this change consisteth; and how it is wrought: I will return to this last point, from which a little I digressed, that by faith in Christ's promises, and by spiritual union with him this change is wrought. To this end (as I said) S. Peter doth plainly lay forth this truth unto us, that the heart is purged by faith, when he saith: By the precious promises which we have from God, (and they are made ours by faith) we are made partakers of the divine nature, or the graces of the holy Ghost, by whose heavenly power, we are able to fly the corruption, and naughtiness both of our hearts and lives, which is the principal let of our obeying God. And therefore that corruption being subdued in us by a stronger power then itself, we have liberty to goodness; whereas before we were in bondage: And not only so, but the nature and qualities of our hearts being changed, we are no more they, who we were before; but are led contrary to our former course. The which selfsame thing, though not in the same words, S. Paul by a most apt similitude setteth down, saying: When we were in the flesh, the affections of sin which were by the law, had force in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death: but now we are delivered from the law (he being dead of whom we were holden down) to serve in the newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the letter. Here he describing the first estate of life,

wherein all live, devilish, and unrenewed, and setting as contrary to it the regenerate and happy estate of God's children after they be changed, maketh this comparison: That as our corrupt hearts like an husband stirred up evil desires in us, having the powers both of mind and body as the wife at commandment, and both these together brought forth all sorts of evil works to our destruction: so the spirit, that is, the power of Christ being given us, stirring up holy affections in us, is as an husband, and hath the powers both of mind and body (as the wife) at commandment, and both these together bring forth all sorts of good works (as children) to our salvation. Whereby it is manifest, that although there be nothing in us, as of ourselves to do the will of God, and to bring forth fruits of amendment; yet God, who purgeth the heart by faith, putteth also a new nature into it, and maketh us love, and delight in the good and holy things which before we loathed; and to loathe the evil which we once loved.

And for this purpose, to make more full this matter, which I have entered into, which of the simple (I know) is hardly conceived; that no exception may be taken against it, consider what our Savior saith: he compareth himself to a vine, and his beloved to branches of the same. To teach us, that as the branch beareth no fruit if it grow not in the vine, but being cut off, withereth: so if we be not knit to him by faith, we can bear no fruit. But as the branch abiding in the vine sucketh sap, and draweth juice from it, and is fruitful: so all faithful, and true believers receive strength from him, and grace, by the which they crucify their own lusts, resist their corrupt will; and so bring forth fruit according to the will of God. For from him the whole body gathereth increase fit for it: who in manner of the soul, quickeneth all the members. And to this end, Christ wrought our salvation, and gave himself for our sins, to deliver us from this present evil world. And from him we have received a mind to know God: an heart to love him: a will to please him; and strength also in some sensible measure

to obey him, as he saith: Know ye, that ye are dead to sin, that is, so made partakers of the virtue and power of Christ, that natural corruption hath lost her vigor, and force, to bring forth most bitter fruits: and also, that ye are alive to God, that is, have strength to live holily through Jesus Christ: which grace although it be not perfect, yet it is such, and that in the weakest believer, that there is apparent difference by it, from his former estate; and such as whereby a godly life is not irksome to us, as before, but sweet and pleasant.

That which most troubleth the weak about this matter is, that this change of the heart, and renewing thereof, is so hardly seen, and so meanly felt within them; that they cannot satisfy themselves in wishing, and desiring to be more changed: And although before, their open gross faults did not accuse them, yet now their inward corruptions do disquiet them: now idle motions and vain thoughts, and fantasies much trouble them: in their praying, reading, and hearing, they cannot be rid of them: now they fear that they believe not (even after they have received to believe with staidness of mind and peace) and all because they want the feeling comfort of their faith oftentimes: their unkindness to God much grieveth them, and besides, their unfruitfulness: to be short, they have many accusations against themselves. All which duly considered, do testify in deed another estate of their minds, then was before; though through their weakness, and the devils malice, they fear hereby sometimes, that they are not renewed, and changed at all. But that is not to be marveled at, for as much as they were so lately drowned in sin, and had no delight in goodness: it must needs be strange unto them to be persuaded, that they are in any better case, then they were; seeing the motions of sin do trouble them now, which did not before, and they have not skill nor strength enough to think, that it is a good sign of their welfare to be grieved for them (as it is indeed) but they think it a sign of their misery, that they have them at all. And yet in that



they do so earnestly seek to be better stayed, even from idle and vain wanderings, and labor to see their spiritual poverty, and their inward corruption of self-love, privy pride, distrust, &c. they may have clear testimony, that they (though but in part) are truly reformed.

And this change of the heart, they have need to be persuaded of, who desire to live Christianly (which shall be no hard matter for them to prove, if they compare themselves with that which I said, about this matter, and find it so with them) but otherwise they shall but coldly go about any service of God whatsoever: this pure heart (I say) coming from faith unfeigned, must be as a strong foundation laid in them, upon which only a godly life can be built, that they may not need to fear, that they are of a double heart: for God abhorreth that in his service, and doth not accept the heart by halves, nor to be served by halves, as Saul did, 1. Sam. 15:3, but will have the whole to be given unto him. He will not be loved a little: for that is neither beseeming his greatness, neither fit for them to offer, who receive so great good things at his hands. And as none can do this, but such as shall see sufficient cause hereof; namely, that they are infinitely indebted to him for his bountifulness towards them; so will he, that such shall make him their chiefest delight, and treasure, as other do the world; and therefore to account it no tediousness, nor toile to labor for it, till they have obeyed the voice which saith, Give me thine heart, my son. And if all men did at the first embracing of the Gospel, thus give their hearts wholly to the Lord (as all they do who unfeignedly believe in him) then should we see it a common thing to have God honored in the world, his true religion, and worship advanced, and there should be no such difficulty to pull men out of their filthy and sinful lives, but they should be as ready to seek it, as the godliest Preacher is, in God's name to urge and require it. But seeing that will not be, let them, which see better, what the infiniteness of God's favor is towards them, give him their hearts

again, as they are commanded, not a piece of their heart, but their whole heart: Even as the burnt offering in sacrifices, was not in part the Lord's, another part the Priests, or his who did offer it, but it was wholly the Lord's: so God will have those, whom he maketh reckoning of, to turn to him with their whole heart, that so (as far as their knowledge leadeth them) they may be at his commandment: not halting, not flitting, not giving him their service sometime, and at other times refusing and holding back by such occasions, as shall fall out; as for their own pleasure, profit, for men's friendship and favor, or such like: for so doing, they shall never be fit to renounce either their will, or lusts, when they are enticed to evil by them, but must yield, and give place to them; which kind of unsavory and fickle service God abhorreth. But if we freely give over ourselves wholly to God, and be resolved to be guided by him in all things, and to this end, wax better settled daily in the assured persuasion of God's favor (which is better than all things besides) so that we may always see cause why we do so; then and not before, shall we have good evidence that our hearts are changed from their old custom in sin, and renewed. And although men will long halt, and drive off, before they will be brought to this, hoping that less may serve, and that they may please God without all this ado, (as accounting it too hard) yet must they be brought to this, when all is done; or else they shall see, that all is in vain that they do besides, what fair shows and colors soever they set upon their doings.

For want of this soundness, and through purging of the heart, as the people of Israel made many turnings to God, when he punished them, but ever turned back again from their covenants, and promises of amendment: even so at this day, there are many vows to God of holy life, and purposes of repentance, but none of them hold, nor take any good effect, though some in longer, some in shorter time, do vanish away, and come to nothing: because men go to work in their

mood, and hastily, not sufficiently considering how weak such foundations are to bear up so great, and weighty buildings, as the whole course of their lives to be holily passed. Judas his preaching and working of miracles, (who was companion with the other Apostles:) Ahab's hasty repentance in hair cloth, and ashes: yea, Jehu his zeal for the Lord of hosts: with all other such shows, as for a time, in the eyes of men seemed to be great godliness, together with Saul's speedy executing of God's commandments against the Amalekites: they had a time to be bewrayed, and brought to light to the world, to have been, either mere hypocrisy and feigned godliness, or sudden and rash attempts, or without root from the heart, even the best of them.

Therefore first let this be known of us, that before the evil life can be renounced, God purgeth and maketh clean the heart, that so it may be fit for so great a work. But seeing the heart is false above measure, and they soonest deceive themselves, who do least suspect, and fear danger; let it thoroughly be weighed, which hath before been set down: that there is deadly hate of sin and corruption, and that with much striving against it, with gripes of grief when it prevaileth, and contrarily, great joy, when it is subdued: this (I say) is in him, whose heart is truly renewed.

## **CHAP. 5.**

Of the renouncing of all sin: which is the first effect of a renewed heart in the true believer.

Now the heart being renewed and changed, must be kept so: but of that afterwards, in more fit place. In the mean season, I will pass to the effect of this cleansing and change of the heart, and show what work it bringeth forth in him that is thus renewed and changed. For I

having spoken of the cleansing of it, as I purposed, namely, that it must, with the whole man, be changed and renewed, before the life can be amended; it followeth, that I should now further proceed to this; that is, to the description of the Christian life, whereby I mean true repentance; or the life of the believer, as I propounded: which is the building that must be set on that foundation: and that conversation, which cometh from the forenamed change; and is a renouncing of all sin, and a care to walk in a new life, (to glorify God thereby, even unto death) as was said before. Concerning which, more particularly (as I promised) this first is to be marked, that (the godly life standing in these two parts: that is, the renouncing of sin, and practicing of godly duties) all ungodliness, and not some part or kind only, is renounced of the true believer, and of him who will soundly profess to live godly: and they are brought to this power and grace, who trust in the living God, and are indeed godly, that they are out of love and favor with the whole course of iniquity, which was their only delight, and pleasure before. They are so changed from that which they were, that now they having tasted of heaven and happiness (being become the beloved of the Lord:) they freely and willingly bid farewell to all the follies of their former times, and the unlawful liberties, (with the which they were deceived) at least in affection and desire, as their frailty doth permit: for they know (who have so far been instructed) that they cannot loath some sin and love other; that were but halting: but as he who taught them that they should not commit adultery, taught also they should not lie, nor steal: in like manner they, who are taught of him, do so judge, and therefore disclaim the one and the other. For how can they loath one sin, and love another? Which were to do contraries? And as pure and sweet water, and filthy cannot come from one fountain: so neither doth the heart reformed, send forth good and evil. So that as one in prison hardly dieted, feedeth with great appetite and greediness upon scrapes and parings, and is well at ease if he may fill his belly

with them; who yet when he is set at liberty, and conversant with his friends, where he findeth variety and plenty, cannot fall to his old fare again; but wondereth now, how he could find savor in every man's leavings: even so it is with him who hath besotted, and made drunken himself with the deceitful baits of sin, who if like a swine he may fill himself with that which his heart desireth, and his eye lusteth after, he is safe and hath what he would: but when he shall see his estate as in a glass, how shameful and dangerous it is, and hath but tasted of the heavenly privileges and liberties of a Christian, he casteth out that former draff as vomit, and by no means can be brought to be in love with it again. Behold such honor giveth God to his servants, that their old conversation wherein they lived sometimes with the rest of the world, and could by no means be drawn from it, they have it in most vile account and detestation, and they which were of the synagogue of Satan shall worship God among the faithful. This is the power of faith (which hath changed their heart) that it is able to make him, who hath it, to overcome, I say not, himself, but even the spiritual craftiness, whereby the devil deceiveth many thousands, and even the poisoned baits and allurements of the world also.

O power unconquerable, and not to be matched! If there were any earthly stay or fleshly hold in any sort comparable to it (which is impossible) in what price and reckoning should it be had, think we? If there were anything which at men's request, could give the life of their enemy into their hands, or help them with long life, or satisfy their desire with abundance of wealth, and variety of sinful pleasure, oh how welcome should that be? But consider (O ye servants of God) and behold it, ye mighty and wise of the world, here is a greater, and another manner of treasure, then all these: and bringeth other delights, then these are able. This suffereth you not to pine away with desire of your enemies death: but it will make you as it did

David, to turn your hearts towards your greatest enemy (which is true manhood and wisdom) and to preserve his life, when you had him in your hands to kill him. And this suffereth not you to hunt about the world for variety of sinful pleasures, as though there were no better use to be made of the time, which is so precious: but this will make you (with Moses) to renounce them when ye might have them, and to find greatest pleasure in doing so, and yet in forgoing them, to think yourselves plentifully rewarded.

Finally, this will not suffer you to fret and to be unquiet in thinking upon the day of death, and to put the remembrance of it far from you by wishing long life: but it will make you sigh and groan to be out of your life, and with Paul to account it a prison to live in the body still: and as the Preacher saith, to reckon the day of death when you must live here no longer, better than the day of birth, which is the beginning of life. O ye men of this world! If ye can tell us of greater commodities, and tidings of better things then these, and assure us how we may come by them, we will forsake and leave all, and rejoice with you: If ye cannot, but rather your best things are those which I have spoken of already; namely, great riches, pleasures, your enemies death, and desire of long life to yourselves, the vanity, uncertainty, and danger of the which I have set down already; then renounce you all that ye cannot safely keep; and rejoice with us: do but taste and see how good the Lord is: and when you see what is best, embrace it: or else I will pronounce the saying of the Prophet against you: which in time shall most surely find you out, and take hold of you, although you hide yourselves from it. Behold, and wonder, and vanish away: for I will work a work in your days, that if a man tell you the truth, ye shall not believe it.

More might be said of this point, but the treatise is too long: now I will return again to show that the believing Christian doth renounce

the sinful course, which all the world besides lieth and walloweth in though some more than others) who, as I have showed, that he renounceth all kinds of wickedness: so he doth it not in some good mood only, neither crieth out of his old conversation, when he seeth shame or danger approach, he doth not (I say) then only signify his mislike of it; but upon good deliberation, he maketh protestation no more to have to do with it: as Ephraim was counseled to say, being called to repentance: What have I to do with Idols, which yet before had been her glory? So whatsoever others do, he is resolved to forsake it: and casteth off all such behavior, as a loathsome and ragged garment. And this is it which our Savior acquainted his Disciples and followers with, after that they had testified ( Peter answering for the rest) that they believed in him unto salvation: He that will be my disciple, must deny himself, which is as much as ungodliness, and worldly lusts: for then only indeed, and not till then, are men fit to hear of any such thing; but do keep out of the sound of such doctrine, as much as they can: which is the cause at this day, that many professing the Gospel, yet never know what this meaneth, namely, to abstain from the filthy lusts which fight against their soul.

Others which do, and must needs hear such things taught, that all God's servants do, and shall disclaim their lives past, and be ashamed of them, it is pity to think how coldly they receive it. Some of them scorn it and mock, and so turn it off that way: some never conceive it: some are often accused and made afraid to see their lives so far off from that which is taught them, but soon forget it, because they see the most of the world to do so. Some are ever in learning how to depart from evil, and to forsake their sins: but the devil holdeth them at a stay, that they never obtain it, because they go about it preposterously, not yet believing assuredly that they shall be saved. A few find the way, the Lord directing them to believe: which,

others, who will not be taught of God how they should believe, but by their own reason, do never reach unto.

But I have not yet spoken of the worst sort of all, who hear this doctrine: For they hate them who teach it, most deadly: they rail on them and disgrace both them and it; and if they can, bring them into danger for teaching of it: although their pretense shall be another thing. Yea doubtless (I say more) if by her Majesty's gracious authority and protection we did it not, (which more prevaileth with them then the authority of God, from whom and in whose name we teach it) their poisoned and malicious stomachs would suffer none to walk peaceably, who plainly and soundly publish it. These therefore are far from overcoming themselves: and yet whiles many sorts in the world are thus far off (as I have showed) from victory getting over their wicked hearts, and consequently their lives; in the mean while the servants of God, who know what the Lord hath done for their souls, renounce all inordinate desires, and wicked actions: that they have afterward no more fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, howsoever they were sometime chief doers in committing of them. So that as the true repentant people of Judah, who had before offended God by Idolatry, when they were brought captives into Babylon, loathed the sight of false gods: and as the good people, who repented by Ezra his preaching, did put away their strange wives, how dear soever they had been unto them: and as Ephraim was heard complaining thus; I am ashamed and blush, that now I bear the reproaches of my youth; so loathsome and wearisome it was unto her: So are they who have felt the salvation of God, at utter defiance with the corruption of the world. And yet if this were done but for a time, or for company, or by constraint, and for fear, or any such like corrupt end, it were not worth the speaking of: for it is to be seen that after these sorts, iniquity is left of many: which kind of renouncing evil is little to their rejoicing, and shall be to their



reproach, when it shall appear in how evil manner they have gone about it. I will not digress, but this I must say: we have had too much experience in our parts, and (I doubt not) so have others, of sundry persons, who once accounted their teachers burning lights, and for a season they received and rejoiced in them, casting off their old course in the sight of men readily: but some for company of those, who persuaded them; some for fear of the woe which hung over them; and others for good report, as long as they could hold out: but these, because they renounced them not, neither upon good consideration abjured them, they returned to them again, as the dog to his vomit: Whereas such, who truly believing do of conscience renounce sin, do as they in Nehemiah, came to the oath and the covenant, that they would never take again their strange wives, which they were commanded to put away, nor look back to Sodom anymore: nor (being washed) wallow again in the mire. Which I say not as though their word, protestation, or oath, could alone by any strength thereof, perform such a weighty vow: but because therewith they duly considered what cause they had to do so: how infinitely they were bound to God to discharge it: and how firmly they were persuaded, that God would make them (who had made them willing already) able also to do it.

And therefore although they saw not that help present, with eye; yet they hoped for that which they saw not, and therefore waited patiently for it, till it should be granted them. And thus both faith and hope being nourished and strengthened in them from day today, they who are the Lord's, do find both will to desire, and strength (though not perfect) to accomplish, to the peace of their hearts, that which they have set upon and attempted; I mean a departing, and that with willingness, from their former intemperance. Indeed it must be granted, that this is not obtained without much striving against the same, and that it will cost many prayers to weaken such

corruption, and to hold such rebellion under: of meditating upon God's promises also: much sighing, and sorrow to see what unlikelihood's there are of subduing such unruly passions, through our own manifold weaknesses. But what then? Is it much, if so great a work require our watching thereto, and diligence, when God is pleased that it be bestowed that way, and without it no common work will go forward? Or is that any just cause of discouragement to us, to take pain for so great profit, when we are sure of it before we go about it?

But it may be demanded, do God servants always prevail in striving against evil? And obtain that which they seek thereby? For otherwise (say some) what discomfort and dismayedness will come thereby? I say, that as God often helpeth them, that they overcome; so they are oft overcome themselves of their affections against which they strive: but yet they have learned not to be troubled at this, as at any strange thing, as if their hope were either wholly or chiefly upholden hereby, and as though they held their happiness by feeling only; when they are taught, that by grace they stand. Neither yet on the other side, do they make light of it, when they are foiled and prevailed against: but as they rejoiced in measure, and gave God the glory, when they felt strength of grace against their temptations: so after they come to themselves again, they are troubled, and sorrowful chiefly for displeasing God, and they take view of their own frailty, ignorance, and negligence better, and confess the same to God, and take shame to themselves: and cast not away their confidence, but be encouraged, and heartened both to hope for pardon, and also to be more circumspect in looking to their ways afterwards.

Now tell me, if God's children be thus brought low and abased, sometimes to pull down and assuage the strength of pride in them, what fearful matter is hereby fallen out? What razing out of their

faith is there hereby procured? Or what great cause of complaining is this? When it is manifest to all who can judge, that the thing which through ignorance and weak faith they feared would separate them from God, doth fasten them more nearly unto him: and through his working, that which they think to be cause of great sorrowing, is turned indeed into sound rejoicing, and that for this cause especially, that they do better know themselves hereby, and have experience of his grace working in them; which otherwise they should not have had.

I cannot more lively compare the malice of Satan in this case, then to one who thrusting thorough his enemy, and purposing to kill him, doth thereby let out the ulcer and corruption out of his body, and so preserve him. After the same manner is it with God's children: much privy pride remaineth yet; and much secret favoring of, and bearing with themselves is in them; which is like to work them great sorrow and danger: the devil therefore sore thrusting at them, and seeking to wound them with the fear of God's anger, because of their sins, or some especial fall, doth thereby purge that corruption out of them by their seeing and confessing and forsaking the same, preventing and watching against it afterward, and resorting unto God by prayer of faith for pardon thereof, and that in earnest sort; so that they do, or may thereupon, obtain it.

And thus we may see that even then when God's servants are mastered of their affections, and in fighting against them, are found the weaker: yet even those falls of theirs, do turn to their exceeding good, afterwards. And therefore it is not their undoing, when any such thing falleth out, as for want of faith, and experience many do often fear. But yet let this (which I say) be wisely received: that to the true believers it shall thus come to pass, and not else: least any hearing this, should after he hath fallen, be little careful to rise up

again in such manner as I have showed, and yet think all should be well with him notwithstanding, which is not possible.

Thus by occasion of this objection I have been longer then I had purposed in this matter. By this it may appear, that how unskillful soever the Christian believer was, and as unable, as he was unskillful to renounce his ignorant and sinful lusts before the Lord became his teacher; yet since that he taught him to fight, he hath grown expert in that spiritual battle: whereas others who have not believed truly, shall find it is as possible for a black Moore to change his skin, or the Catamountain her spots, as for a man accustomed to evil, to leave it. As Christ said of the rich man: It is as easy for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, as for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven: so no more can a wicked man renounce his course: for the wisdom of the flesh, that is, of man unrenewed, is an enemy to God, because it neither is, nor can be subject unto him. If this were thoroughly settled in men's hearts, that there is no dram of goodness in them, by which they might be able to turn from their former wicked ways, but that their carnal wisdom and reason, to the which they most cleave, do hinder and hold them back from it; whereby it cometh to pass that it is so hard for them to renounce all that which is evil: would they not think it worth all labor and travail to come by it? Who now are content to be deceived in thinking that they have it, and yet are utterly without it? Neither can this be otherwise with them whiles their hearts are untamed, and remaining in their old estate: but when they be endued with new qualities, they shall find this both possible and easy (as hath been said) to command their lusts and desires (which were sometimes unruly) and have them in subjection by little and little.

## **CHAP. 6.**

Of the diverse kinds of evil to be renounced, and namely of inward  
against God and men.

But to proceed: as we have seen, in what manner sin is to be renounced; so let us now consider the diverse kinds of evil, which are to be renounced, before we lay forth the good fruits and duties which proceed from the same. And these kinds of evil are of two sorts, either inward or outward.

And to speak distinctly of them (that I may proceed) we are taught, that in the godly life, in whomsoever it be found, the lusts and concupiscence's which reign throughout the world, and make them whom they rule, to be as brute beasts: these corrupt lusts (I say) with all other such defilements of our actions, are in the godly life renounced, according to the light which we have to discern then; yea the faithful desire to abstain from them, as men who have received another manner of spirit than the men of the world, and therefore can take up their delight in better things: and who know the hurt which these unruly evils bring with them, whatsoever show of pleasure they offer. And although all have conflicts with them, and do not hold them under in a like measure; yet of the weakest of God's children they are hated, and strived against, when they are once seen and perceived. But by these inward evils, I mean not the native infection of the heart, for of this I have spoken before, but the fruits hereof, namely, the wandering, noisome, and blind thoughts, fleshly desires, and worldly lusts, which arise from the heart so infected, which are contrary to the commandments of God, and tending directly to the destruction of them, who bring them forth: So that as the hands, feet and eyes be the members of the body, and do whatsoever the body hath need of; even so these are the members, and as the arms, feet and eyes of the heart, and execute and perform whatsoever it desireth. And although they are so many that no man

can number them (even as the fountain of the heart is so deep that no man can gage it) yet because they are much unknown, I will give some help in the understanding of them, and so much the rather, because they being unknown, many never mislike their lives, neither are ashamed nor weary of them, though they be stained shamefully with them, and so become most abominable. And first the root of all the rest is unbelief, when a man not giving sound credit to the word of God, and the holy Scriptures, dareth be bold to harbor the same whatsoever is forbidden in them.

From hence grow out, even in those which profess; three arms, or boughs, of the which everyone shooteth forth as branches, innumerable worldly lusts: first, impious against God: second, injurious to men: and the third sort, most properly concerning themselves.

As touching the majesty of God, as men's hearts are full of blindness, and covered with darkness; so it goeth against them to be taught the true knowledge of the true God: it is death to them to be drawn out of their ignorance: they cannot abide to hear of his judgment day: they would there were none: they rebel against the spiritual and true serving of God, and that which they yield him, is a will worship, even that which fantasy, custom, or fleshly wisdom teacheth them.

And whereas he requireth that confidence should be put in him, for continual defense, deliverance, and succor in soul and body, they are carried with distrust, as with a whirlwind, and therefore their hope is faint, or none at all, before they see their desire accomplished. In their great dangers, when means to come out, do fail them, they are overcome with fear, and almost beside themselves. In losses impatient, and full of murmuring, receiving them as from a cruel judge, and sorrowing for them deadly. And as some have their hearts

thus boiling in their trials, and afflictions: so others have their hearts swelling against God in obstinacy and contempt for his afflicting them, and are loose, careless, and desperate, whatsoever pincheth them: yet in a scoffing spirit they say within themselves, let him do his best, yet will we not turn unto him, nor seek unto him: (oh horrible blasphemy, fearful to be once named!) that I say nothing of them, who ascribe all to blind fortune, (in cursing of the which, they curse God;) or as the Atheists do, to nature. Are not these loathsome guests to lodge in the hearts of Christians? I do not go about to set down the poisoned corruptions, and lusts of Heathens, Turks, and Atheists, as they are properly called, that is, such as deny God utterly, for so should I never have done; but to lay forth some part of the corruptions which dwell, and abide in the hearts of such as go for Christians: that many of them who can bear out matters boldly here among men, may see what villainy and treachery they commit against God. This is a little of a great deal of the dishonor which they offer to God. And as this declareth what rebellion is in men under the cross: so how they behave themselves towards him in the days of their prosperity, experience teacheth, and I could show at large, if the time would suffer me to declare it. As for thankfulness, there is little or none in them: I appeal to their own consciences, what do their hearts yield to God the whole day thorough, for his manifold mercies; and if some do, yet is it done only in words for a fashion only, and from the very teeth outward: and yet many are ashamed even at their table to do that. They rejoice in the merry world, whilst they have ease, and plenty; they look for no other, but wish it always so: yet what grace do they desire the more, although they have their fill, but are rather more headstrong, and inordinate? And if they ask ought of God, it is to bestow it on their lusts, being made drunken with their pleasures: so that they are lovers of them, more than lovers of God, and become insensible thereby, and past all feeling. If some be not thus hardened, yet shall they be found to have small

desire to furnish their hearts with the best gifts, when yet they see, that he which hath given the one, is as ready to give the other also. And as for the true worshipping of God, how far are the most from taking pleasure therein; when yet one day bestowed in it is better than a thousand in any delights beside? For superstition and blind devotion carry many to false worships: affirming boldly, that they cannot rest in that manner which God prescribes in his word, that is, to do it in spirit and truth: though God sendeth us to the Scriptures to know his will and mind; but the will-worship which they devise to themselves, and which they take up by tradition, as to represent God by an image, and Christ by a Crucifix, that only pleaseth them: and their devotion is frozen and cold, except it be helped by such counterfeit delusions. And many of them which embrace the truth, and retain the right manner of worshipping God according to his word, yet are content to be deceived, while they deny that which only maketh the other well pleasing to God, and savory to themselves, that is, to do it with their heart and joyfully, without which God telleth them plainly that in vain they worship him. And as in their worshipping of him, by the use of religious exercises, their hearts take no delight; even so in his service, throughout the course of their private conversation, how vain, profane, and dissolute are their hearts, what pleasure is it to them to please him, though it should be their meat, drink and pastime, and how lightly are his judgments passed over, how fearful soever they be? So far is it off, that they can expel their hypocrisy and other sins.

Moreover, they have no desire in peace to be taught the true use of it: namely, to have peace with God, and as much as in them lieth to be at peace with all men, Rom. 12:18, no, not in their own houses, which yet to be without, is a little hell to them. And as for the Lord's Sabbath, and other many good means appointed on the same to season and change their hearts, they sensibly loath them, or find no



savor in them: neither is it any part of their thought, to seek any comfort in them (although they be the chief flower of a true Christians garland:) or if some of them do, it is in superstitious devotion, wishing that religion up again, whereby God is dishonored highly: but as their fathers before them did, even so do they pass through the world, as shadows, their minds looking no higher: so that though they were made to honor, yet they not understanding it, are like the beasts that perish.

These may serve for a taste of the corruptions and worldly lusts, which men not worse accounted of, do swarm with, directly tending to the dishonor of God: from which with the rest that follow, when we shall see how God delivereth his beloved, we shall have cause to love the godly life more heartily, which is by God's grace freed from such intemperance: freed, I say, so that it ruleth them not, neither reigneth in them, although sometimes in something it prevail against them, till they repent of it: which grace none of the other do find, nor obtain, when they be at the best.

But to go forward: to acquaint men with some of the unbridled and worldly lusts, which carry them after the hurt of their neighbor: what unreverence, contempt, and obstinacy appeareth to be in the hearts of many against their betters, diminishing that authority, credit, and estimation, which God hath given them, so that place, years, and gifts are had in mean account of them? Where is that ancient reverence which younger men in the Ministry have given to those who have gone before them in labors, gifts, and good example? They imagining themselves able to do far better than their elders, and therefore ambitiously aspiring to that which they ought not: and lifting up themselves above them, when yet they should have learned to honor and submit themselves to those of low degree? What unthankfulness in the people, to them which labor for their peace

and welfare in their outward estate, and are instruments to convey the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ unto them? I mean Christian Princes, and governors? How many esteem of them, who labor to make them happy and to live forever? What wishing is there that there were none such, which is all one as to make sure work to go to hell? How do many hunger for their death (yea though they be their natural parents) by whom they might be enriched and preferred, although to make their folly and madness the better appear to themselves and others, the Lord taketh them oftentimes away before them? What stoutness, sauciness, and boldness in youth towards their ancients and rulers, till it break out from within and show itself in gesture and words? Which bringeth forth such rudeness and barbarousness, as were too bad among Heathens. But I will contain myself.

Further, whereas the soul of our neighbor should be most precious to us, how do many rejoyce to see them fall into any sin, devise to make them offend, as to be drunk, to leave off hearing Sermons, and fret or disdain at them who live Christianly; rather than to reverence the graces of God in them? And whereas we should love others as ourselves, that is, indeed, and unfeignedly, not in word and show only; yet how truly is it verified through the world, that through the strength of their lusts, one man is a wolf, yea a devil to another? What anger, which cannot be appeased? What deadly hatred one against another? What earnest and bitter seeking of revenge; and yet they go not once to their heart to take shame for them? How easily and readily do men take the least occasion from others of hard conceiving of them, and yet how unmeet do they think it, that others should take the least displeasure by the greatest occasions which they offer them? What little care is there that none be hurt by them, but a churlish senselessness, of it, if it be so, rather than pity and compassion in steed of it? As concerning cutting off broils betwixt

men, who is wary to avoid occasions thereof, sometime by readiness to lose some part of their right, as Abraham did to Lot, and coming to lawful and equal conditions of peace, which were but their duty? Nay rather, men bethink them of all means to provoke others further then they have done. And as for bearing of them, if they pass bounds toward any, what meekness or mildness is there in us to forbear them, and to be patient and long suffering towards them? And when it may well be done, to pass over their offense and bury it? Where is any pacifying of wrath in men's selves, and a free forgiving of them, but rather a seeking of revenge for the smallest wrong? This is far from the Apostles rule: Weep with them which weep: rejoice with them which rejoice, and be alike affected towards all men. In these kinds of fleshly lusts, the commonness which I see of them, and the bold justifying of the same, hath made me somewhat the longer.

Now I come to that kind of these fleshly lusts, which are most properly so called: And they are, when men let loose their hearts to filthy unclean thoughts and desires, with purposes of defiling their bodies, which should be kept holy to the day of marriage, and after to the end of their life. What variety of unclean wishes and desires do occupy them? How are they inflamed through every object, of such persons as please their eye, and so are caught and deceived with that which is precious in them? And least that should not be enough against them, they rest not in this, which is most shameful; but they delight to blow up these burning lusts further, even to occupy their thoughts in all talk of unclean matters, to feed their eyes wantonly, that they may show themselves to be those, whom the Scripture describeth, namely, to have eyes full of adultery: and to such places their delight is to go, where they may have that carnal humor satisfied, or incensed by all provocations, that thus the precious treasure of the mind which is fit to have received most divine matters, and to have made it more like unto the Angels, is made a

stinking brothel-house, and a nursery of filthiness: What beating of their brains is there about deceiving and entrapping innocent Virgins, and modest Matrons to bring them to their lure? For common strumpets, and such harlots as have been defiled already, may be come by with less study. I speak not of the practice of the worst sort of the people of our land, but of them which are civil, live outwardly in some honest course: yea and many of them married persons themselves, and for want of better, bear office to see good order in towns, of which sort there are many thousands, who are possessed of these deceivable lusts, neighing after their neighbors wives, as the Prophet speaketh, and so stopping the course of a Christian life, from the which some of them otherwise had not been far off. But this for a taste.

I will proceed unto that kind of lust which is the greedy desire of money and gain, if they may come by it, whosoever smarteth by the loss of it. What a sea of evils is there in this kind? How many ways, and that all the year through, are men's heads occupied about this, how they may by some new deceit, wind somewhat from others? What insatiable desire is there of other men's goods? And how do men resolve that they will be rich, though the Apostle to Timothy doth show them the danger of that purpose? What repining is there in all sorts to see others get that which they themselves cannot come by? How doth the mighty devise to pill and make bare the meaner sort, the Landlord the poor tenant, till he hath fleeced him of all, and left the bare carcass? Whereas the predecessors of them both lived together before them in love and good will, the one well contented, the other well refreshed under him and sufficiently maintained? Which is one main cause of so great beggary. How do many, without regard of other, follow this point of wisdom, that they may have some commodities wholly in their own hands, that so they may raise a universal dearth for the satisfying of their private appetite? In

common dealings, nothing (to speak of) is sweet to men, but stolen waters, as it is in the Proverbs, when men can see how to get more than their own: the borrower (though he hath found friendship) yet seeketh and bethinketh how to defraud the lender, if by any means he might pay it back no more: so doth the lender devise new kinds of usury and oppression against the borrower, whereby so many thousands are undone: when the Lord commandeth straitly that there be no oppression nor usury at all: So of the seller, and the buyer; the love of equity and indifferency is thrust to the walls amongst men, if it stand not with their gain.

And this they will do, who are otherwise not void of religion: by all which it may be seen how men's minds are occupied, and with what good stuff their heads are filled.

But to draw to an end in the laying forth of these worldly lusts, tending to the hurt of our neighbor in his goods; and to go to another kind: whereas men should seek to preserve the good name and credit of others, as their own, they are carried to nothing more preposterously, thorough their unruly lusts. For how rare are those men, which take well, and interpret in the better part things done, or words spoken doubtfully, but rather suspect as soon as they hear them, that all was done of malice, and therefore conceive hardly against them by and by: so strong are their rebellious lusts, that they cannot be held in: what deep conceits therefore do arise, and rash surmises of them, (as they did in Saul against David and Jonathan his son) and all thorough mistaking of that which was rightly done, and honestly meant and spoken? How do their hearts burn hereupon (think we) to speak and do, not ambiguously and doubtfully against them, but resolutely whatsoever cometh into their head, as Shimei did against David? So that they thirst to defame them by word or writing: yea, and if many years before there were any offense

committed by them, of which they are privy, although they concealed it till then, and made light of it: yet now, (if it hangeth them) are set on fire in their mad mood to disclose it: as the wicked Hebrew did abuse Moses. What inventing's of libels, and devising of new slanders; yea, against our own brother and mothers son: and with such shameless boldness, and impudency, that Jezebel was not able to go beyond them in that faculty. And by these, it may be guessed not doubtfully what swarms of outrageous lusts do lurk secretly in their bosoms, who yet see little, or nothing amiss in themselves, and oftentimes set as good a show upon their doings in the sight of others, as the best: nay, I say more, who shall with a Judas his kiss embrace them, whom behind their back they thus abuse. And none of these foul and shameful faults would break out openly by mouth and life, if they were not nourished secretly in the heart before.

But that I may shut up all that I have to say of these sorts of worldly lusts, least many should object, that although they grant that sometime they be led with these frenzies, yet they be not always so bad: I say that is smally to their commendation and rejoicing: for as they are now too oft and common, so should they be commoner, if other things did not break them off. But can they deny this, that whereas their desires should tend to good, and lead them to God, that yet they are the most of their time taken up in wishing [ 10] somewhat of their neighbors to their hurt? Whereby, besides their deceiving of their own hearts, and spending their precious time in dreams about things which come not to pass; so they plainly show what they would have: wherein, although some contain themselves at one time without consenting to that which they have foolishly wished: yet have they no more government over their hearts, but to offend after the same sort at another time: and what a deceivable, unprofitable, and wearisome life is this, (to say nothing of the peril

which cometh to their souls hereby) thus to become servants to their own lusts, who are created of God to so singular ends?

Thus I have in some sort laid forth the lusts of the heart against God and men throughout the commandments, the which swarming in wicked men, as I have showed, and ruling and carrying them, are the causes of all dissoluteness, licentiousness, and disorder in their lives, and of many sore punishments thereby. By that which I have said of this matter, it may appear, what a singular mercy of God it is unto his children, that their hearts are not nurseries of such draff, but that they abhor it rather: For though this grace of renouncing such filthiness be little regarded of the common sort, but counted preciseness, yet shall it be an ornament in these before God, and a most precious comfort unto themselves.

## **CHAP. 7.**

Of other inward evils and sins, most properly concerning ourselves.

Now follow the branches of earthly corruptions, and worldly lusts, which although they do offend God; yet they do not directly concern the person of God, or of their neighbor, but especially themselves, that in some sort I may discover and bewray the loathsome kennel from whence all ill life doth come: which few do well know, and therefore suspect in no sort the danger that they are in: a taste of the which, as of the former, but more briefly, I will set down. And they are so evil and monstrous, that though men who are possessed of them, deal neither with God, nor men directly; yet their hearts are too lamentably, yea, and that for the most part continually encumbered with them: these outrageous lusts of theirs do sometime so willfully carry them (as it were a stream) that missing of their will, even that which they would have, they desire nothing more than to

be out of the world; forgetting all God's kindness toward them: and yet when God calleth them hence indeed, they cannot abide to hear of it, but rebel against it, more than against anything in the world.

Again, they are so unruly, that if God giveth them the bridle, and follow them with abundance of his outward benefits, they have no delight in them, except they abuse them most excessively in eating, and drinking, not to live thereby, but to surfeit, to be pampered so as they be fit for no good thing: in play from one kind to another, counting it pleasure to live deliciously for a season: in costliness of apparel, and curious trimming up of their carcasses, not mindful of the necessities of others, howsoever their superfluity would help to apparel many which go naked. How do they please themselves, and imagine that others do admire them for the same? Yea and for all this, oftentimes (that I say nothing of them which run in debt for it) wringing and powling others, for the maintenance of it; joying beyond measure in their children, though little caring for their good education: which is the very pride of life so manifestly condemned. Upon these, and such like, their hearts are set in their plenty, and contrarily fretting, murmuring, and vexing their hearts, when they fall into necessity: although they hear that a good name is better than gold; yet they will follow their appetite so grossly, until the fruit of it causeth them to lose credit, and good name, as if it were nothing worth. What should I say of their priding in their wit, wealth, beauty, strength, wisdom, and other gifts? When they are, who knoweth not what, if it were but by this description, and when as also they know not how long they shall enjoy them: they account of tomorrow what they will do, and cannot tell what may fall out today. Their lightness, unsettledness, and willful frowardness for everything that doth displease them; their vain, idle, and deceitful desires of things, which become not the gravity of such as are borne to a better life; their deadly pangs of sullenness, when nothing will please them; with



their curious heads, which are ever meddling in things not pertinent to them; with their sottish self-love, that so much blindfoldeth them from seeing that anything in them is offensive, with innumerable other concupiscence's, that daily come from them: may easily persuade them to confess that their hearts are burdened, and loaden, though they had not outward sins to press them down, and to say that it is divine power and grace from above, that must purge these and such like unsavory draff out of them. And yet these, and many other such are renounced as they come to be known of God's servants, and are resisted according to the wisdom which God hath given them, although in others they rule and reign. And the obtaining of grace to do this, is one part of the Christian life, as I have said. For they making the word of God their guide, have this benefit by it, that they are made wary and circumspect against their evil and noisome corruptions, as David saith in the Psalm 19:11, where he setting down many uses and benefits of the law and word of God, as that It is more to be desired then fine gold, and more sweet then the honey comb; addeth this: Moreover thereby is thy servant made circumspect and wary. And Solomon saith the like, Prov. 2:10. When wisdom delighteth thy heart, and knowledge entereth into thy soul, then shall counsel preserve thee, and understanding shall keep thee from the evil way: And what way is worse, then the devices and desires of our evil hearts? Saint Paul likewise, to show that God hath given this grace to his faithful ones, saith 2. Cor. 10:4. The weapons of our warfare, are not carnal, but mighty through God to cast down holds: casting down the imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ: and to the Ephesians 4:22. If we have learned Christ aright, we have been taught to cast off, concerning the conversation in time past, the old man, which is corrupt through deceivable lusts.

Thus therefore now having laid open the pack of these worldly lusts, and proved that the Lord by the Scripture giveth greater grace to his, then to obey them, James 4:6, Rom. 6:16. I will proceed now to show, that this is a special piece of Christianity, thus to hold under, and resist them; so as in some sort, we may be made able to overcome them. No man will greatly deny this, if he be advised: for what should hinder one (if he be unburdened of his passions, and inordinate desires which bind him from duty as cords) but that he may go forward without let, readily, and roundly? This being always understood, that he is not without daily striving to obtain it, and closed about of infirmities still. It is the evil heart that causeth men to fall away from the living God: they are their fleshly lusts which fight against their souls, that both hinder them from walking with God, and will bring destruction in the end: even these lusts, as S. James saith, which fight in our members, they are that carry us violently and foolishly after them from our settled peace, to fret and rage (as enemies in war, one against another) when we have not our desires satisfied, nor obtain what we would. Therefore these being weakened, and their force restrained, we may clearly see, that with ease and cheerfulness the Christian life shall be set upon: for as our Savior Christ, because he was void of all corruption and sinful desires, therefore the prince of this world attempting him (as he doth other men) yet found nothing in him which he sought, fit for his purpose; and as Adam in the time of his innocence stood free for a season from falling, when as yet his heart was not tainted: even so our hearts being cleansed and purged from their natural corruption, although not wholly rid of it, and our troublesome lusts and passions being appalled and weakened within us, and having received a deadly wound, cannot so master us, as that we shall not love, desire, long after, and do the will of our God, though, in respect of that which we ought, weakly, and imperfectly; yet in respect of that which otherwise we should do, both soundly and in good sort. And this will

God accept for holy service, and not look straitly what is done amiss, but pardon our sins because of our advocate: so that notwithstanding our obedience be far from that it should be; yet we may rest therein, even such as it is, with sound peace, void of fear.

And thus far, God in great mercy, hath made us partakers of the knowledge of his will, that we having our desires in this wise subject to him, as I have said, we may possess our souls after in peace and heavenly manner. Therefore if any man, whose heart is purified by faith, doth exercise himself in knowing these his soul and shameful lusts, and mark how he is led away of them, and deceived by them, and which of them do most trouble him, and ofttest prevail against him, and therefore by the helps which God hath given him (which shall be set down in the next treatise) doth resist them; let not him doubt, but that he is occupied in the godly life, and that he is come out of the stinking Sodom, of his old sinful course: and thus doth the godly man carry himself, and at this mark doth he chiefly aim. For the true wisdom which is from above, of the which every godly man hath his name, that is, he is called wise, this wisdom showeth itself in all manner of holy conversation in meekness, and suffereth not the contrary lusts to dwell and abide in the heart, as bitter envying, provoking's one of another, swellings, tumults, and storming's one against another, with such like, as everyone hath his measure. In deed all men have not overcome themselves alike; no not even they, who have set themselves to this work of plucking down the ruins of their old building: for they who have great and clear knowledge of the will of God, and of the whole mystery of godliness, joined with affection, they are the most forward: And to speak plainlier, they who make faith and a godly life their treasure indeed, finding and feeling that they are greater riches and pleasure to them, then gold or all substance, and in their account take them so, as in their judgment they know and will say, they ought to be so; they are the men, who

will take most pain to withstand their lusts and desires; they get most victory over them, and are least overcome of them: they (it must needs be granted) have greatest advantage over them, and know best what fruit in sound peace, and many other ways is reaped thereby. And such examples, God be blessed, we have, and those not a few in the Scriptures, who have attained to this, I mean, to a great measure of such grace: and by their good example, there are through God's goodness in this age many, who have enjoyed great liberty from God this way, that no man may think this (which I am now about) to be a thing impossible to attain unto, neither denied to be granted us of God, as it shall be sought and cared for. But, as I said, all God's servants have not one and the same, therefore not this excellent measure.

To go forward then, for the edifying of the rest, who, by God's grace, are many more then the former, who all desire to leave and forsake their noisome corruptions, and rebellious wills; but yet have nothing the largeness of heart, and measure of grace, which some others have, I would willingly say to them that which the Lord hath revealed unto me: That they be not troubled at this, that they be behind others of God's servants in the overcoming of themselves, and have not gotten mastery of all affections in such sort, as some have done: neither doubt they that faith and godliness are utterly to seek with them, because of this. For all believers have not their part in one and the same measure of mortification, and grace: all men cannot reach and attain to that which some do: all know not alike; all value not goodness and liberty from fleshly lusts alike: and therefore cannot take pains for the same, as some others do: some receive thirty fold, some sixty fold, and some an hundred fold, by that which they hear. It is commendable and meet, that we should walk, as we have the best, for our examples; and to follow them, as they are patterns of good things unto us: but to stay at this, that we are not at all in

Christ, because we are not in all points like unto some other in subduing our affections, that is in no sort to be yielded unto, if that which is in us, be in us in truth. Which thing I speak for their cause, who both think, and oft utter the same, saying: Oh I am not, as such of God's children! They are happy, for that they are not troubled with frowardness, impatience, anger, weariness of good exercises, wandering in hearing of Sermons, reading and prayer, and such other like carnal desires, as I am: and yet the same persons both have had a true taste of eternal life, and earnest combats with their corruptions: yea and while they complain, they testify their going forward in subduing their corruptions, far otherwise then they who are not so troubled; and do declare plainly that they love the grace which they mourn for, and hate deadly the corruption, which they complain and cry out of. Therefore let no man measure himself by another: but in that little which he knoweth, let him be faithful, renouncing fleshly lusts, as he seeth what an excellent estate of life it is to be freed from them, I mean, not to be in bondage to them: for there is no liberty like this: all other, when we seek to fulfill our own desire, is utter slavery and bondage.

And these things being rightly considered, it may appear, that in a godly life the inward lusts of the heart, and known corruptions of it, how common soever they be in the world, are resisted and declined from, of all true Christians in their measure, according to that which is alleged by the Apostle S. Peter: We having most precious promises given us of God, are made thereby partakers of the grace of the holy Ghost, by the which we are able to fly the corruption that is in the world, and reigneth amongst the ungodly. If they then who embrace and believe the promises, and therefore have fastened upon a godly life, do fly the lusts and corruptions which others delight in and embrace; it followeth on the contrary, that they, who are ruled and led by them, can claim no part in a godly life. For he that is so

mind cannot be but carnal: estranged from God, and a bondman of hell: which if it were weighed, would cause many thousands, who now think themselves good Christians, to take some pain to bridle their intemperate and unruly hearts, and to be wounded for the same deeply, who contrarily give liberty to them in most things that they desire. Let such weak Christians (to omit these) rest their hope in some certain estate: and not overreach themselves with things which they cannot compass: I mean by resting in some certain estate, this: First, that they have a clear knowledge of their salvation. Secondly, that they account it as their chief treasure. And thirdly, be set forward in some plain and good course of life, whereby they may grow in faith, and the obeying of God, though with some striving. But if they walk destitute of any of these three, they shall be snared much with fear, and unquietness, while they feel that all is not well with them: oft fearing that they have not begun aright, nor were ever truly called: and yet (if they should forgo this hold) seeing there is some lively sparkle of the new birth in them, let them not break off and faint utterly, as the wicked do, but moan and seek home again, as a bird wandering from her nest, least otherwise they walk heavily many months, it may be, years, before they find deliverance. And until they do so set themselves to nourish their faith with great care and diligence, their godly life (with what labor and toil soever it be) is but a building up and a pulling down: for one day they shall like, and another day mislike: sometime they may feel themselves well stayed, and oft otherwise without peace. Yea and I say again, when they are stayed, yet if they hold not this as their best riches, to solace their souls every while (as they may well and easily do, having so many good helps among them) with this sweet favor of God, which may surmount all other follies and delights, in their persuasion and estimation, they shall not either abide long in that possession of peace, or like the course of their life which they lead: but the devil

who knoweth their weakness, and envieth their godly and sweet estate, will raise many occasions to unsettle and trouble them.

These three things therefore being of so especial price, must be more regarded, and sought after of such as want them, more carefully then they have been: and preachers not only heard teaching these, but also conferred with about the same: that the people's hungering after the same, may whet on and encourage their teachers with all willingness and readiness to resolve and comfort them coming unto them, as the people in the Gospel: or rather as Christ's Disciples came oft to him to be taught, and have their questions answered. And although other doctrine is not to be neglected, yet I would have all to know, that nothing is so necessarily to be learned as these three are, of such as have already attained to the knowledge of true happiness by Jesus Christ, what other things so ever be wanting. All goeth forward untowardly, without these, as I have said. And as a man knoweth nothing profitable unto salvation before he believeth: so after he believeth, he knoweth nothing profitably to grow on with comfort, in his Christian course, without these three faithfully and carefully looked unto and preserved.

For my part, I do thee to understand, that it was the most principal regard I had in setting out this book, to help and direct the weak Christian throughout from his first entrance into the knowledge of Christ Jesus, that he understanding and believing, what a rich portion God hath bestowed upon him, he may make such account of it, as it deserveth, that is, esteem it far better than all that he hath; and then enjoy the fruits of it in an holy life after, as God hath taught him. Who so travaileth faithfully in purchasing these things (and yet the purchase is easy and cheap enough, even without money) shall go forward readily, and with ease, and make no toile of godliness but pleasure: neither have his teeth watering after the greatest men's

dainties, but they after his. He shall not be at the point of them, whom I described a little before by their speech in the way of objection, who sometimes are driven to doubt of their calling, but be able to guide himself, how to rise when he is fallen, and to return when he is stepped out of the way: and to walk in most sweet safety under God's protection all the day long, as shall be seen afterward.

Thou wilt ask me, what thou shalt have for thy portion: I say not this measure, nor that of heavenly peace, full contentation, and other graces: neither as this man or that: but such as for the beauty and brightness of it, shall cause thee to marvel, and to say, as it is, even more than thou couldest have asked. If thou further demandest, how thou shalt attain to this: that thou mayest thus know, esteem, and keep it: this present treatise (besides all help of public Ministry, and private conference) shall teach thee: neither do I doubt, but that in one part or other of it, the humble and teachable reader shall find it.

But yet further to satisfy those who cannot rest, because of the want of such graces as God affordeth to some of his children; they are to understand, that as we cannot, nor may not appoint the Lord his times, and measures; so we can show no reason, why we should not hope for that which he hath promised, if we seek it as he teacheth us, and as hereafter shall be showed. And if the Lord, in this case, increaseth not our faith, knowledge, experience, strength over our corruptions, our comfort, and such like fruits of his spirit, (as we have no cause to fear it, while we fervently desire it) he knoweth sufficient cause why he doth not: that is, because he knoweth it should not be good for us, if he should give us them: So that his holding back, is not, for that he is unwilling to bestow them upon us, but because he seeth that they would be to the hurt of us; as that we may be unfit to use them well (but rather as many do) to wax proud of them: for the which cause the Apostle himself saith, That the Lord



did deny to him a gift, which he had oft, and earnestly prayed for. And for this cause God may deny blessing to his own faithful servants, as also to try them, whether they love them so well, that they will seek after them still, and yet this ought not to be taken hardly of them. But otherwise (these excepted) if they grow not, it is most justly to be imputed to their own fault; as their ignorance, or dark sight in knowing how they ought to labor for these graces, and their slothfulness in refusing pains taking, or slightly and hoverly going about it, and favoring themselves against their consciences, and not removing out of their way such clogs as they saw to hinder them: Or if these be not the causes, then is it their own timorousness, and unbelief; they fearing that such heavenly grace as they seek after, shall not be given unto them, wherein they do God no small dishonor: who is more ready to give then they to ask: and giveth plentifully to them which ask, and casteth no man in the teeth; but then they must also ask in faith, and waver not, but that they shall receive; for if they waver, they can receive nothing. Can the Lord provide more strongly and surely, to remedy our distrust, then by speaking in this wise unto us, to embolden us, who are so sore letted and hindered by unbelief, that when we do that which in us lieth to please him, and to grow on in grace; yet we stick fast in it, as in the mire of unbelief? And when we have done all, yet we doubt, God will not grant us our request? So engraven in us it is: thereby showing that we can hardly believe further, then we can see. I know men's answer herein is this; they dare not be so bold, as to assure themselves that they shall have the grace which they pray for and seek: But I say, let an evil conscience be taken out of the way, and their doubt may soon be at an end. Oh but they are afraid, least they should presume? What? When God promiseth and commandeth us to trust him? Reverence (no doubt, least we should be too bold and light-minded in dealing about so holy matters) is a virtue much to be sought after, and embraced: but we must be able to put a manifest

difference betwixt a full persuasion of that which God promiseth, and an irreverent boldness to challenge that which he promiseth not. And therefore to return, fail not thou (to the accusation and wound of thy conscience) in serving God's providence, and in using the means faithfully to grow and increase in his graces and gifts, staying upon the Lord by faith: and assuredly he will not fail, nor disappoint thee.

## **CHAP. 8.**

How the minds and hearts of the believers are taken up usually, seeing they renounce inward lusts.

But to return to the renouncing of our lusts: If ye ask me what manner of persons they be who are at defiance with this unsavory stuff, and what thoughts such have, as expel these corruptions, and have them in hearty contempt, seeing the mind is ever busy, and seldom unoccupied? I answer, that the persons are, as I have said, sinners, as others be, but sanctified: and weak, but willing to be better; and that their thoughts are according to the diverse growths and ages of God's children, which are three. The highest degree, is old age, or the experienced estate: which yet is not the perfect age in Christ, for that shall not befall us until the life to come, but a firm, constant, and settled going forward unto that perfection. The second, is the middle age in Christianity, in which, as young men in wrestling, we have courage against our sinful lusts; but yet like unto them; we have many foils, and are oftentimes cooled in our courage, though we sometime prevail. And in this estate, we are very fitly compared to the grain of mustard seed, after that it is shot up, and hath a blade and stalk, till it come to have boughs and branches to shelter the fowls of the air; so in this we are ever growing, though slowly: and this degree of Christianity, is betwixt old age and infancy.

The third is childhood or infancy, the lowest and the last, the which is principally discerned by an earnest desire of the sincere milk of the word; and namely of the promise of the forgiveness of sins: which although some of these dear children of God cannot with full assurance lay hold of, yet this their hungering desire after it (which cannot be satisfied without it) with a sensible fear to offend God, is a true sign thereof. And this is the lowest degree of true believers; which estate is at first, weak in respect of the other two, as it is in the natural body: for in the young babe, it is first weak, and after groweth to greater strength, as it groweth in years: yea, and this is an excellent estate, in respect of the counterfeit, which have most near resemblance of it, in whom may be seen some flitting motions after good things, but in time, they vanish and go away, as they came. These degrees of the spiritual birth being thus described, which by the Scriptures may easily be discerned, I will now show, about what things the thoughts of these three are chiefly occupied, or desire at least to have them occupied, though they do not ever attain to that which they desire. And to begin with the first, some of God's elect, through long experience, and much acquaintance with the practice of a godly life; have obtained grace to guide them more constantly than others: whereby they so serve God, that they may please him with a reverent awe of his majesty, which holdeth them within bounds, and in holy and religious fear of offending him, while the other often break out more easily. And this estate, though it be to be aimed at, of all godly people; yet it is not obtained, but of such as have accustomed their minds to the heavenly course, and to whom good meditations and thoughts, to shun and avoid evil, are become a pleasure; and as well to be able to discern the same by their understanding, and judgment, as to have their will in good sort at commandment to follow the good, and shun the evil. Such as Saint John calleth fathers, in his epistle (saying, I write unto you fathers) because they had known the Lord, and his manner of dealing with

his people, and had experience of the discipline and government of his house in a godly life a long time.

Now such as have been trained up in the obedience, which the Scripture teacheth, from their youth, are able, upon their so long trial of God's directing them in that course, not only to go forward cheerfully and readily themselves, but also to persuade and hearten on others. And such therefore, thorough this grace received at God's bountiful hands, are much freed from this bondage, and seldom so grossly holden under of their corrupt lusts, as others, saving that God will make them see their weakness from time to time, especially to subdue pride in them, which is soon kindled in them, and to hold them under: they have therefore their minds usually set upon someone or other of the infinite heavenly instructions, which from time to time they have treasured up in their hearts, both out of the Scriptures, and the fountains of other holy men; whereby, although they are not quickened as they would, and desire to be, yet they are held from much evil. The particulars, of God's unutterable kindness, of man's mortality, the momentary estate of all things under the sun, the blessed estate of the elect, the endless woe of the damned, &c. who can reckon? They have much time taken up in the beholding and meditating of God's majesty, as they can conceive of him, his power, his wisdom, his everlasting being: of his judgments, and how he is provoked: of his patience, and long suffering towards the world; his daily pulling of them from their pleasures, who thought they should never be taken from them: and their own estate, and several parts of their lives much occupy them; how they may keep in their way: For it is the wisdom of the prudent to understand their way. Also, how they may hold out constantly the profession of their hope with joy unto the end: how they may resist all occasions of evil (for they presume not without daily help from God for all their strength) they consider what lets they shall find from Satan, the world, and their own hearts:

how they may order well their particular actions in, and through the day, in their callings, giving to all men their due: that they may prosper, and also, that they may make a good account at the end of the day, and so at their last end. They who have these, and the several particularities under all these contained, to occupy their minds about, is it doubted, what thoughts, desires, and occupying of their heads, and hearts they have, to keep them that they may neither be idle, nor unprofitable? The thought they take daily (unless they be much blinded) is in the greatest part, this: how they may have a good conscience in all things, pleasing God, and how they may be prepared for the cross, and to keep the same mind under it, that being exercised therein oft and much, they may reap the fruit of righteousness, even most sweet peace: and as their salvation groweth nearer, then when they first believed; so they may be fitter, and readier to meet the Lord; their latter days being far better than their former: to be merry whilst they think he hath blessed them, and never at ease, nor to think themselves well, but while they are under his government.

Have such no other things to do, but that with the scum and offscourings of the world, they must ask how to spend the long summers day, and the wearisome winter nights? Although others, who are profane, have not, yet with these we may see, it is otherwise. What? Do men think, because the devil hath filled the most parts of the world with darkness, so that the most see none of these things, and having no experience of, nor acquaintance with them, do not desire to be partakers of them: do men, I say, therefore think, that there is no other, nor better way to take up their minds, then as they do? But like brute beasts, and wild Irish, to pass their time, or to jump with the world, and so to be like others? Oh land! Oh people, infatuate and sottish! That under the Gospel, and the same so long in thee continued, yea, and that in many places so fruitfully and

faithfully preached, art yet to seek of the true fruit of the Gospel; and art not led to God by it, more than if there were none: oh that men created of God to live forever, should be content to be ignorant, and without care or love of the infinite good things which are revealed to be known and delighted in of them! The Lord hath done great things for thee (O man!) but they are not wonderful in thine eyes: this blessed time is the day of thy visitation, but it is hidden from thee.

But to return: I have showed thee, how some of God's people have their minds exercised, when they have chased away the noisome drove of such unclean lusts, as were wont in times past to possess them as well as other; yet do I not conclude that these are not at all troubled with evil thoughts and vain desires, as though I would prefer them before the Apostle himself, who said, that the messenger of Satan (even some pricks of corruption) was sent to buffet him: and at another time, Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin ! Nay I am so far from saying so, that I contrarily affirm, that their purest actions are mixed with corruption: and no better than good water running thorough an unsavory vessel; as their faith, love, uprightness, mercy, &c. Now then, if God should look upon their faults, though they may be kept from foul and filthy uncleanness's, how should they be able to abide it? No, if it were no more than untowardness and unfitness to the duties of their callings, and to other good works, and much wearisomeness therein. I do not (therefore) forget myself in speaking thus of some of God's servants: for whatsoever I say of them, let no man gather that it is a making of them equal with the singularest of the Apostles. For we know what Paul could say, of his joy in his sufferings, and that oftentimes, and the strangeness, and variety of them, of his lifting up into paradise, and that he had heard such things, as are not lawful for a man to speak.

These and such others, I think, God gave him as privileges, which were mere arrogancy and ostentation for any man among us to dream of, or compare with him in: seeing our sufferings (to speak of them who have sustained the greatest afflictions for the Gospel in our age) have been small: and the other things mentioned to have been showed him, are more extraordinary: but to have our minds and hearts so cleansed, and purged from the strength of corrupt lusts, as I have said, to have no fellowship with them: and when they are kindled in us, to have grace and strength ordinarily, and usually against them, and to see and know how to avoid them; it is so far off from arrogancy to think that it should be so, that it is far unbeseeming the gravity and age of fathers in Christ, and strong Christians, not to have it so. So that as ancient men, who have lived long, are called fathers for their age, skill, and experience: so these for their time and long continuance in Christ's school are called fathers; and therefore ought to have wisdom and knowledge, how to walk through the world (though a wilderness) in safety: how to withstand the devil in his assaults (though subtle) and skillful also in their course and carriage of themselves, how to be patterns of good life unto the younger sort. And thus they having their minds established with grace, and unburdened of such affections and thoughts, they may rightly, and in good sort, go about their works and dealings: as laboring, bargaining, journeying, companying, serving their prince, and doing any other lawful actions; and yet not be distempered by them: which things for want of such a well ordered mind, no other men can do, as by the complaints of the better sort may be seen, and by experience of the bad sort is perceived, and daily found. And this for the highest degree, and greatest measure of grace in God's children.

The second sort is compared to young men, who then are in their strength, rather than when they are either children, or old men: so

some of God's servants are as yet neither experienced nor thoroughly acquainted in the Christian battle as the fathers, nor utterly ignorant of it, as the new borne Christians: these are especially occupied in fighting against temptations, and resisting and overcoming their unruly desires, which hale and draw them after the same. Therefore, as they who are young men in age, and in their lusty years, are commonly of this middle sort of Christians (if they be truly religious: ) so S. John writing to them, doth show them what is their chief and principal work: that is, to resist the devil, and his strong assaults, which in them, lusty and strong, are not easily subdued: and persuadeth them to this combat, not only by telling them what a glorious victory it shall be to them to vanquish such an enemy; but also that they may be sure of it, as if they had got it already. These knowing by the light of the Scriptures and the Commandments, how corrupt their hearts are, and how many sinful thoughts and desires do swarm in them, they watch their hearts; whereas before they knew of any danger, they little looked after them: they pray against them now, often, and earnestly: they have some fear in company, and alone by themselves (which is no part of evil men's thought) least they should be overcome by any such affections, as they are in danger of, and yet they are oft overcome. They do also oft times consider how they may avoid the occasions of sin, least thereby they should be enticed and so disquieted in their minds, and break out to the offense of their brethren, and the reproach of their profession among the bad: anger, impatience, frowardness, fretting, sensible desiring of their neighbors goods, as wife, servant, or such like, which in times past were common matters with them, and their delight, their hearts have now such smart and wound for the same, that they grow to beware of them, weary of them, ashamed to think that such vices should be found in them: and count it no needless nor lost labor to have their care thus set on work, that they may avoid them. Therefore such as know the use of fasting joined with their



prayers, do use it as occasion serveth, and as their need requireth, that they may the easilier purge out that old sour leaven. They renew their covenants with the Lord to please him better, when they see how they have slipped and fallen from their good purposes; and yet are soon unsettled again. They are in very good case this day or week, to withstand any sin; and yet tomorrow or next week unsettled and sensibly distempered; in their prosperity soon forgetful of their fervent care which they had, and then as much misliking themselves for it, when they see it: and to be short, they are much grieved for their sins, and yet oft overcome of them by inward suggestion and outward occasions. And what is such a life, but a combat and conflict? Which, although it may seem miserable, yet is it safe: and the life that is void of this, is the life full of woe and dangers. Furthermore, whatsoever their earthly dealings are, although they neglect them not, yet they are not most deeply and earnestly setting their hearts upon them (as far as they can espy it in themselves) but often looking to the principal, and that which is most worth, that they may find peace betwixt God, and their hearts. Through ignorance and unacquaintance in their Christian course, knowing, what hardneses and difficulties are in their way, they are many times discouraged; but they, who have laid their foundation strongly, rise up after some heaviness, and discomfort, out of their sleepiness and security, complaining thereof, and come to themselves again. All good helps that they can enjoy, they are glad of, public, or private, and thus (I mean, by the strength hereof) they have oft and much refreshing of their minds, and put away much tediousness, fearful pangs, and dangers of evil: by all which, and such like, it may be perceived, what the thoughts of such are, and how their hearts in great part are occupied. And although they have not, as the former sort which I have spoken of, ability and strength to occupy and exercise their senses and minds so continually and constantly to be heavenly hearted, and to have God their guide so sensibly, as they

(for want of experience, and perhaps knowledge to) yet are they much delighted with the good examples of such as go before them, and give them light: and to be framed after them, as they are after Christ, is the thing which they most look after and desire.

They having thorough God's goodness prevailed somewhat, especially at sometimes against their strongest corruptions, which were wont to bear too much sway in them, they earnestly are set against the smaller, and such as seem less dangerous; as the idle, and unprofitable roving's of their brain: (which do not directly so much carry them after evil, as hinder them from good, blindfolding their judgments first, and then poisoning the will afterwards) as the dreaming of outward peace, and prosperity, of long life, of pleasure, and profit; vain wishing's of that which other have, being things precious in their eyes: Which they are oft tickled with, till they come to better remembrance of themselves; much like the Apostles (when they were yet weak) dreaming of promotion, of an earthly kingdom, and who should be greatest among their fellows: which toys and other like building of castles in the air, the devil had filled not only their heads, but also their hearts with the delight of them sometimes, and their mouths also with the talk of them, as their chiefest pleasure.

So that they having thorough custom long lien in them, they cannot so easily and readily cast them off, though they see the shame and vanity of them. Their labor therefore (of their minds, I mean) is in great part, this: to keep themselves from being taken up of them, seeing good meditations are hindered, yea, and estranged hereby; sometime prevailing, sometime prevailed against, whereby their sorrow is the more: but they do not all this while, see the happiness of this their combat, which seemeth their greatest misery. Because it is certain, that for their great good they are holden under of their

infirmities, even that they may be the more humble, when they see themselves so imperfect, and corrupt, who yet had dreamed sometime before, that they were void of that corruption (though the more was their ignorance) a long time before: and their short mourning shall bring after deliverance from that bondage, great measure and continuance of rejoicing: whereas if they were not held down after this manner, they should forget what they were in times past, when they lived under the power of darkness and the bondage of sin. By this which I have said, it may appear how the minds of these are occupied, and that this second age and growth in Christianity, is a striving rather, betwixt fear and hope, sorrow and joy, then a superiority over the unruly affections: and an estate standing in need of counsel and help, rather then fitted and experienced to counsel, direct and settle others. But the more sure they be of their salvation, the more expert they shall be in the battle.

Now the third sort of the people of God, are compared to little children: of the which, some are as it were in the birth: of whom the Apostle speaketh, Gal. 4:19. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you: who, though they as yet know it not, are dear to God, and have sure tokens of it, as I have showed in the first treatise: and they have many properties of the other young ones, which are of this third sort. The other be such as are young, and hang upon the breast, that as such grow to know the father and mother, when as yet they know nothing else; cry after them, and desire the breast, whereby they are nourished, and joy and take their pleasure in these: even so it fareth with this third sort of God's elect, if they be well grounded in the truth, and have rightly been taught, how weak soever they be, except in temptation. For they (as the Apostle saith) know the father: such light and understanding they have of the Gospel, that though they know not how to serve him; yet they know that his favor is all in all to them: in so much, as if

some of them have not full certainty that he is tenderly affected towards them, they so long after it, that nothing can satisfy them without it: About which their thoughts are chiefly occupied, and in the which their delight is, after they know what it is worth; and in the means of their spiritual nourishment, which is the word of God; and not least of all in this, that they may not in the least thing offend or displease God. This Saint Peter setteth forth by the same similitude of young children, when he teacheth young Christians, how they must look to grow up in their spiritual life; Desire (saith he) that sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.

And these are the especial things which are most apparently to be seen in them, by others; and felt of themselves: who also are much troubled for want of stronger faith, thirsting after, and joying in the sense and feeling of God's loving kindness. True it is, they have little mind to the sin, which they were wont to offend in; yet that is not so much to be counted sound practice of godliness, (for that they oft times little mark and consider how they are tempted and enticed, having their mind taken up in that, wherein they most desire:) but are more like to fresh and unexpert soldiers, who have not, as yet, been feared in the field: but where they see that they have offended God, they take it heavily. Their calling is cheerfully followed, whilst their small faith is upholden, by cleaving to the promise: and as uncheerfully, when that faileth, moaning and pining, if it be long wanting. There is great danger to be feared in both these their estates through Satan's malice and subtlety, which they yet are ignorant of, and unacquainted with, as they are with most of the other hindrances of their going forward.

The one of them is, least whilst their comfort continueth, they should neglect their lawful business, as thinking it to be the greatest let which they have: seeing by means thereof, they cannot attend to

reading, praying, and thinking of God's love, to the quickening of their hearts when they would: although when they have leisure and opportunity to such duties, they have no such desire for the most part; neither do they use it commonly to the most and best advantage of their souls as they might. Here Satan appeareth as an Angel of light.

The second danger is, least when they be void of this comfort, they fall into heavy dumps, distrustfulness, and fear that all was but a shadow, and a dream: from hence may arise despair for a time; and after, a sleepy and secure conscience, as fearing that the Lord will no more restore to them the grace that they were wont in him to find. Here the devil showeth himself as a roaring Lyon. But before experience teach how to deal herein, counsel and help of other, who are able to minister it, with calling upon God, (as well as ordinary hearing of Sermons) is chiefly (when they are so weak, that they cannot help themselves) to be sought for, and regarded. And the rather, for that their childishness doth require the same: For many follies, weaknesses, gross ignorance are in the most of them, and many deceiving's of themselves, many phantasies, and oversights are carried about of them: yea, and these not only long lien in, if they be troubled with melancholy, and not teachable, following carefully the light which God revealeth to them; but also the lusts which ruled them before, will hardly be mastered, but keep their hold, and abide in great strength to their disgrace and discouragement: especially when after that they have a while joyed in their salvation, they afterwards not well knowing how to occupy themselves, shall wax idle and unprofitable, and so grow to their old course again, when they cannot get into a better, which Satan doth mightily labor to bring them to.

For we must remember, that they are compared to children, for that they should daily grow out of childishness; and not look, as it were, to be always set on the lap. Which wisdom God giveth, teaching even his weak ones to know themselves better from day today: and to look to bear some crosses (which God sendeth for the exercising of their faith and patience) because he their father doth see it meetest for them to have it so; and to prepare them for greater by little and little: And as children grow to leave childishness, so they should begin to dislike such faults as they espy in themselves, and not to think, that they should be from time to time borne with and winked at in them. Therefore our Savior compareth the estate of his Church and people in the first age and beginning of it, to a grain of mustard seed, which being once rooted, how small soever it be, groweth forward from appearing above the ground, to be a blade, and so to branch: Teaching his thereby, that they should so look to go from one degree to another, that though they did not know what was to be done of them in this their Christian course, when they first entered into it: yet now after they have been trained up in it for a season, and have tasted of the promise of life, they should hasten thither, thorough all lets which might hinder them; and purge out, as they come to espy them, many unbecoming qualities and customs, as excrements. And seeing their happiness is not here below, therefore they may not dream of any such thing, that is, to have their heaven here: nor for their professions sake look, that the ignorant and wicked world should commend and esteem of them; but contrarily: yea, perhaps of their own flesh to be despised and hated for it.

They are to begin to know the multitude of fleshly lusts, which secretly lurk within them, seeing they are now much fitter to discern and find them out in themselves, then ever they were at any time, the Lord tenderly dealing with them, as not to show them all at once, which were enough to dismay them; nor how many afflictions abide

them, which were like to confound them. Their religion must not be to espy faults in other (for that religion is soon learned) and to hold a vain and deceitful hope of their own righteousness, when it is but froth: for that is ready enough to take hold on them, especially where they are not under good teaching. Neither let them think much to hear a rebuke, which savoreth in them of much pride and blindness; nor to think every good thing rare and admirable in themselves, when many evils are within them, which they do not yet espy and find out: but reverence God's graces in others, that they may the sooner be like them.

Thus I have showed in some sort what are the thoughts, affections, and desires usually, and for the most part of the weaker sort of God's children (about matters of the soul) this being added, that they are grieved, when they are led of the contrary: and this is to be understood of that part of their estate, which is free from strong and vehement temptations: for otherwise, it may best be gathered out of the former treatise how it is with them; the which I have partly laid forth and described plainly, and partly set down in the way of exhortation. For the same things that I exhort them unto, are the very anatomy and representation of their hearts, except the devil hath cast them into some spiritual sickness, as I have said: which he doth to many of this weak sort, as also he may do, and doth where he can enter, with both the other sorts also. My meaning is, that the children of God weak or strong, do not only step aside sometimes from the peaceable estate, wherein they desire to keep: but also are in danger (without continual watchfulness, and earnest and oft praying) to be sensibly dazzled, as men not knowing where they are, and stripped of grace utterly to their own feeling, as if there had never been any: Which I say, that none may be dismayed (as they might easily be) if they should hear only the best of the state of the godly, and not understand something of the worst also; and yet, even

that worst part God turneth to their good, as they in time by experience do easily perceive. But if any think that this last sort of God's children (which indeed is the weakest of the rest) or either of the other, be nothing differing from the unregenerate in their thoughts and desires: they must know, that the secretest hypocrite, which of all unreformed ones cometh nearest them, is yet far differing from the weakest true Christian: as both may be seen by that which hath been said of both, and as the same hypocrite would confess, if he might be converted. And I will in few words show as much as shall be expedient. For when a godly man dislikes himself most, yet even then he is far before the best of the other: who have not their minds occupied about heavenly matters; the thought thereof is tedious unto them: they desire no acquaintance therewith: neither delight they to think how they may be better reformed; neither can they be brought to put themselves in the weights of the Sanctuary, that is, to try their estate by the word of God: But their thoughts and desires are about carnal liberty, pleasure, profit, long life, revenge, &c. even as their speech is, that cometh from their hearts, frothy and vain, idle and unsavory, earthly and worldly. And when it is any better, it is either by constraint of others, or to show the pride of heart, or for vain glory, or to some such end, or else they are soon weary of it. So that, it may truly be said, that the desires and thoughts of God's people, even the weakest, differ much from others, who are unrenewed. And this may in some sort show the usual thoughts and desires of this third kind of godly people, as of the two former. As for the diverse measures of spiritual growth in them, in degree one above another, as I have followed the Scripture in the setting out thereof; so I thought good in a word to put the reader in mind of this, that every action mentioned in the three kinds of our estate, must not precisely be so appropriated to that kind, in which it is reckoned, that it may not also pertain to one of the other: but for the most part, the affections which are reckoned to everyone, are



most proper to that, to the which they are referred. Neither is any to think that these cogitations, which I have set down to belong most properly to every kind of age in Christ, are the only meditations and thoughts of them; but that amongst others (according to the diverse occasions of everyone) they have oftentimes these, and such like occupying their hearts, but more oft desiring, then enjoining them: whereas others which are not partakers of the promise of life, have seldom any good thoughts; or if they have, they are fleeting and momentary, and either caused by fear, or provoked of others, and as I may say, violent, so that they abide not; and not voluntary, seeing they have not the spirit of Christ, which only doth work them. And all this that I have said of the three sorts of God's people, may clearly be illustrated and proved by the many examples out of the holy Scriptures, who of weak became strong: As Moses, who was first afraid to look Pharaoh in the face, desiring that another might go who was meeter than he: yet afterwards he was not afraid to do his message boldly and thoroughly in the name of the Lord. And Peter, who in his middle estate, as I may say, was so faint and fearful, that he was stricken and flighted with the voice of a silly damsel, Luk. 22:57, yet after, when he grew to the degree of a father, was not abashed at the threat of the high Priest, Act. 5:29, and yet both these were weaker than in either of these estates, at their first beginning: As the plants, corn, and grass, are first tender, then stronger, and at last settled and at their full growth. And thus much of the cogitations and affections of the three sorts of God's children, that it may be seen that they are not carried about of their lusts as the unregenerate: but have their hearts occupied in far better manner.

And thus to return, and to join this which followeth to the end of the seventh chapter (for this former came in by way of a parenthesis, to answer a question propounded in the entrance into it.) Now that I have spoken of inward lusts and sins of the heart, and showed how

they are disliked and renounced of all true believers: it followeth, that the same be proved, concerning the outward sins of the life, that they abhor and shun them also; that all may see, they have little cause to please themselves, or to rejoice either.

## CHAP. 9.

Of the second kind of evils or sins to be renounced, namely outward.

To rejoice either about their salvation, or the goodness of their heart, if their behavior be stained with outward wickedness, and their holy profession blemished with open and shameful sins, is vain: which is the more to be marked, seeing many boast that they have good hearts to God, when their lives are wicked. When Samuel willed the people to try their repentance to be sound, he willed them to put away Balaam and Ashtaroth, that is, their strange gods, and shameful Idolatry which they had delighted in. And Paul telleth the Corinthians, that they must cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh, as well as of the spirit. But the less shall be needful to be said of this, seeing the whole course of the Scriptures, both doctrine and examples, as also common reason doth testify the same, that none can prove their hearts upright, if their behavior be offensive and evil.

For doctrine first, that of S. Peter doth plainly show it, where he saith, If a man after he hath professed a Christian course by acknowledging the forgiveness of his sin, and the hope of everlasting life, shall yet be entangled again in his old sins, and overcome of them, the latter end of that man is worse than the beginning: for it had been better never to have acknowledged the way of righteousness, then afterwards to turn from the commandments given unto him: And they that do so, are most fitly compared to dogs which return to their vomit, and to swine which having been washed, do wallow again in the mire. S. James also is bold to say, that if the tongue only be unbridled (be the rest of the life reformed how it can) even that one disorder in a man professing the Gospel, shall be

enough to testify against him, that his religion is nothing worth, but vain. If his religion be in vain, he can neither have any part in salvation, nor in a godly life: How can we which are dead to sin (saith the Apostle) live any longer therein? The reason is, seeing they which are dead to sin, are so made partakers of the power, virtue and grace of Christ, that natural corruption hath lost here force to bring forth bitter fruits. So that neither men can profess religion without casting away their old behavior, but they must be dissemblers; neither can they be truly godly, but they must endeavor to walk free from offensive evils (this always provided, that these offensive evils be such, as are known of the parties to be sins.)

As for examples, they are many and clear, which set this truth plainly before our eyes. When Joseph saw that he could no otherwise keep favor with his mistress, and hold still many other liberties, which in his place he did enjoy, unless he would defile his body, and give over himself to her whorish demand: because he was a godly man, he would never consent; although he brought upon himself thereby, utter displeasure, and for ought he could see, perpetual misery: How can I (said he) do this great wickedness, and sin against God? Moses being a very man of God, refused, when he might have enjoyed it, to be called and counted the son of Pharaohs daughter an idolater, and chose rather to lead a hard life with the people of God in the wilderness, then to live in sinful pleasures for a season. Zacchaeus one of the chief toll-gatherers, an infamous man counted by the very multitude (in so much that they thought hardly of it, that our Savior Christ would go into the house of so bad a man) yet when Christ had converted him, whilst he abode that day with him, and for proof thereof, had pronounced of him openly, that he was that same day made the son of Abraham, who at his entering in unto him, was a manifest oppressor, and peler of the people, what did he? A thing seldom seen in such as have their hearts nailed to their goods, and

have their whole delight taken up in them: He revenged himself upon his covetous, and miser-like mind, and his greedy devouring of other men's goods: and as sweet as they had been to him in times past, yet to show how this sin was in account with him, he giveth half of them to the poor: and made restitution with the rest fourfold, to such as he had wronged.

Oh worthy example to all oppressors, or Usurers! With whom all is fish that cometh to net: and which (whosoever smart for it, beg, complain, yea and pine away for very sorrow of that which they have lost) will not forgo any piece of their appetite: herein coming behind Judas the traitor. Oh happy Zacchaeus! Who haddest learned in so short time, that which many of thy companions in sin, as greedy as thou wert, as unmerciful to the poor, as violent in drawing from others, to the enriching of themselves, can never learn in all their life time. Full truly do they verify the Scripture, which saith, It is as easy for a Camel to go through a needles eye, as for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God: Well it were with them, if they could learn of thee to cast up their gorge, and to set less by that, which above all things, yea above God himself, though to their own perpetual shame and woe, they have made their delight.

But I must proceed. To end therefore with laying forth anymore examples: how forcible is that of the woman in the Gospel of S. Luke, who having been (as Zacchaeus had) a woman of notorious life; yet when she saw that her many and great sins were forgiven her, had her unchaste life in such detestation, that in token thereof, she made her eyes which had allured men to uncleanness, a basin of water to wash Christ's feet, and her hair of her head, which had been abused to the same purpose, (now in token of utter renouncing such ungodliness) a towel to wipe his feet: and yet this detestation is not

said to have been showed toward sins, which had not greatly troubled them, but they were those, which had stuck most near them.

Now if these with many other could not allow their sins, which by nature they loved, and by custom they had long lien in, we need not doubt, but that other, less enticing them were much further from them, and renounced of them: that it may truly be concluded, that the believer in Christ forsaketh his old sins, though they were never so pleasant unto him.

## **CHAP. 10.**

Of four sorts of such as hope for salvation; yet renounce not open sins, and outward offenses.

But we need not spend many words about this matter, that the servants of God have, and ought to cast off outward sins. Another thing here is chiefly to be regarded; and this I think good to advertise the Christian reader of: that there are many who seem godly, and are not; that he may take more heed to himself, least he be found of the number of any of them. I refer them all, to four special kinds: the first are gross offenders, whom every vile person which knoweth them to have made greater shows of godliness, then the common sort do (and yet not to be lights in good living) nor such indeed, as they go for, but deceivers; every vile person (I say) will be ready to laugh them to scorn, and hath reason enough, he thinketh (they being such) to bring them into disgrace. For when such a profane person once hath found out their hypocrisy and hollowness of heart, by open and oft committed evils, he is the further off from all little reverence (which yet he showed to them before) and hath Christian religion itself in meaner account for their cause. I will not deny, but (such is his shame) that if any walk sincerely indeed, and without just cause

of rebuke, yet he is little moved at their example, neither greatly reverenceth them, or takes any good by them, but reproacheth them rather. But that is because he hath seen so many, who beside some outward appearance of zeal, were little more gracious in their lives, or better then himself; and therefore he is hardened to think so of all the rest. Which willful blindness and hardness of heart, though it be too fearful a sign of God's vengeance to him, and that God hath given him over into his own hearts desire; yet in the meanwhile, this in great part may be justly attributed to the lives of those, who professing godliness, in their deeds denied the same, and were nothing less than they went for. Whose cursed course of living (I mean them which have caused others to fall most dangerously) doth witness and speak fore against them: and they are enemies to their own soul, and nothing the men they go for: and seldom have I seen such to be reclaimed from their evil custom and course when they have long lien in it, and to be brought to any such change, that in charity, better hope might be conceived of them, but as they lived, so they have died; that little other good could easily be reaped by thee, but this, that such as knew them might beware of them. For when they be so gross in their lives, that for all the appearance of religion, they be justly ill spoken of among the profane: it had been better they had never made any profession at all: As in that one example of Saul is to be seen, who though he offered sacrifices to the true God; yet did things odious in the eyes of the wicked world, 1. Sam. 22:18, and such as the worst of his servants could not be brought to approve, and join with him in, save that one, even cursed Doeg the Edomite.

To the forementioned sort, if we shall adjoin three other kinds of bad ones, it shall easily appear that there are infinite persons living among good Christians, and of some so accounted of also, at least of themselves; who yet have not renounced open and apparent sins. The first of these three kinds, are the rude and common sort of

people: and as ignorant for the most part, as they are rude and barbarous. They fear no danger, and their own speeches do best bewray them: when they be reproved, their shift and answer is, that their hearts are as good as the best men's, though they cannot talk greatly of religion, nor make no such shows as many can: and as for their lives, they hope they serve God, as Christian people ought; and keep their Church, and have no acquaintance with any which hold false opinions, but have the good will of their neighbors, and if need were, could get the hands of many, for their honesty. Indeed, (they must needs say) they have such evil nature, that they cannot but be angry, when they have occasion offered them; and revile, and revenge when men provoke them: and that some are so evil, that they can never be in charity with them: and though there be hard agreeing betwixt them and their wives, yet it lasteth not long, though it be often: neither have they many times had their neighbors to set them together, they thank God: and they think the best couples jar sometimes. They give their servants and children liberty to do what they will, and to go where they list, on Sabbaths, and at some other days, as long as they will do their business: and if they hap to curse and ban, or swear, (they say) they were greatly urged to it: and though they do not like this singing of Psalms, and Prayers, and reading in their houses (for they think there is reason in all things) yet they love as well to hear their own man say service, (I speak in their own phrase) and sometime to hear a good pulpit man too, as the best: They are no common gamesters, they say, but after they leave work, when they have any good company, such as they themselves be, and on the Sunday out of service time. The world being so hard as it is, they are fain (they say) to put away their bad ware for good, and to mix dross with corn, and to make a lie in commending of that which is evil, or else they cannot live: And if they be told that God will cast such into hell for their evil lives, they hope, they say, in most things, they serve God as well as others; and



God have mercy on us, they say, if we should be damned for every such thing: and we repent when we have done: we cannot be saints here: we will set our good will to God's, and that which we cannot do, we hope Christ hath done for us: and if the hardest should fall out, yet if we may have but one hour to repent us before we die, we trust to do well enough.

These with many more such speeches, which lay open their heart, and estate which they are in, towards God; to every man that can judge, are suitable fully to the course of their lives: and therefore he that judgeth by the Scriptures, will think them far from everlasting life. And yet as gross and brutish as they are, there want not such who should tell them the truth more plainly, who yet hold them up with good hope of their salvation, in so dangerous estate as they are in: which they themselves so flatter themselves in, that they had need to be driven from their deceitful hold by all means possible, and not upholden therein: not unlike to them in the Prophet Jeremiah, where he saith, They have healed the sores of my people with gentle words, crying peace, peace, when there is no peace. Alas, the Apostle might ill say, that he, to whom the Lord hath given assured hope of salvation, must renounce ungodliness, of necessity, if a man loaden with such a burden, might yet as one that runneth well, attain to the crown of glory in the Lord's kingdom!

If any marvel what I mean to set down this rabble of evil qualities, it may please him to understand, that it is the thing which I am to prove, that no such life stuffed with gross iniquities can be that life, which God will accept of: and yet, many thousands think otherwise, and their opinion being most welcome to these, whom I have described, it was most meet that I should by so good occasion, debar such ignorant men, having no good conscience (as much as in me lieth) from such boldness.

Besides, I would wish others (who do not perhaps utter their minds so rudely and plainly as these, but are more subtle to beguile themselves) to take me as speaking to them, if their lives be corrupted, and defiled with these, and the like offenses; and yet will needs hope and trust for salvation: for it is to be feared (and therefore I account this watchword not in vain) that many a one will be ready to laugh, when they hear the homeliness of their speeches, who had more need to weep for being so like them in qualities.

But to proceed: There is a third sort, which come yet more near to the godly life, and may seem to have great wrong offered them, if they be not so taken: who because they keep within some civil course of honesty, and are free (some of them especially) from gross offenses, think themselves to be of the best sort of good livers, and scorn to be accused, though their open faults are many: whom though God doth sufficiently brand, when he saith, That harlots shall enter sooner into his kingdom than they: yet because they take no warning by his word; he doth further bewray them, and set them out in deed to be known, such as he never took pleasure in, by suffering now and then, here and there, in all ages some such to hang and drown themselves, or to die in despair, or other miserable manner, if possibly he might bring some of the rest to repentance. These persuade themselves that they do live godly, and yet by apparent proof of Scripture may see plainly, that they do not so: for of such our Savior speaketh when he saith to his Disciples, Matth. 5:20. Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. These (it feareth me to utter it, but that it is God's truth) as far off as they be from God's kingdom, go in sundry points far before the two former sorts, who yet think their estate to be good. Oh therefore how many perish! And yet some of all these three sorts, are sometime pricked in conscience, and sore disquieted in themselves for their sins (which is

hardly procured and wrought in the most hearers, no not even by oft and sound teaching) but yet in deed this is only a slavish terrifying of them, for fear of the punishment: in which fear they do also confess their sin, and that in tears sometime. There may be seen in them also a leaving for the time of some of their old evil qualities, that a man would marvel at them, as John the Baptist did, when he saw the Pharisees resort to his baptism. For this is but external, in some things, and for a season as Herod, who did many things at John his teaching: and as Ephraim in Osee, whose goodness was as the morning dew. In their trouble they seek the Lord, but they seek him not, as they who would find him: for then would they not leave off to seek, until they had found him (as the church did in the Canticles, chap. 3:3,4.) Neither do they regard his ways, when their trouble is ended; as Job speaketh, describing the hypocrite thus: The hypocrite doth not pray, that is, serve God always: meaning, in one condition of life, as in another: in peace as in trouble. Yea more particularly, when God smiteth and plagueth them (either by their enemies, diseases, losses, and such like) they covenant religiously with him, that they will never fall from him anymore: but they flatter him with their mouth, and dissemble with their tongue, their heart is not upright with him; neither are they faithful in his covenant. They will sharply tell others of their faults, though they be but small; yea though they be but so in their opinion: as though they could not abide that God should be dishonored: but they themselves will not take a reproof, they hate to be reformed. They are zealous in some things; but it breaketh out many ways, not to have been true godliness by their inconstant fervency and other passions.

They hear the word of God willingly sometimes, and some of them speak of it with joy, and wonder at the heavenly wisdom of it; but it vanisheth away and fleeteth: whereas if it had been sound, it would have increased and continued, as the herb that taketh root in good

ground, becometh fruitful. So they attain to many good gifts of God, whereby one would think sometimes that they were not far from eternal life; but they either bury them in a napkin, and do no good with them, or use them amiss, as Judas did Christ's communion with him, to their own hurt, while they dare be bolder by means of these good gifts to offend God, than if they had them not.

But if I should reckon up the beadrolls of gross faults which they suffer in themselves, and nourish (yet under the name of infirmities) it should easily appear, to such as have any judgment in the Scriptures, that they cannot be reckoned among the believers, and beloved of the Lord. For howsoever he gather his elect out of all these kinds, yet are none of them to be accounted for his, while they abide and continue so. From these faults therefore let the believers separate themselves.

A fourth sort, and those diverse from these now mentioned may be added, who, being sore stumbling blocks, and offenses to many, deserve to be reprov'd with the former: ye shall know them by the description which I set down of them, by rehearsing their particular properties: who if they repent not, will in the end (though I hope better of some of them) prove no better than the rest. Among whom they are to be counted, who seeming to be of the forwarder sort, do yet offend dangerously, and suffer the same blemishes before men, to break forth in countenance, speech, behavior (against such as they mislike, though far better than themselves) which testify that their hearts are inwardly poisoned in the sight of God: who for their zeal that they have towards the worship of God, do think so well of themselves, that they cannot brook nor abide any other, who differ from them in judgment, about some things; though they have no clear ground in the word of God. And if they be at variance with any (how honest and godly soever) yet cannot afford them a Christian

and friendly countenance, nor speak a word to them, without taunting, girding, rating or wounding them, and in their absence deface and defame them very uncharitably, for somewhat which they dislike in them: and yet oft times without any just cause at all. Yea, and some of them being themselves but private men (but put the case some of them be in the Ministry) and men unlearned, do make it a great piece of their religion, to censure sharply, and descant arrogantly of their betters and superiors: so that it is well known that many of them have turned utterly to become Schismatics, and others have not been far from them. Which kind of zealous professors, I do the more boldly reprove, because some have thought me a favorer of such: their readiness in receiving the Gospel I have well liked, and as I have been able, furthered it: but this arrogant, bold, and uncharitable spirit of theirs bringing forth such fruit, as I have mentioned (never taught them in any sound Ministry) I utterly dislike, and have done from time to time, since I had any judgment. Who having been content for some years space, to be taught (as seeing great need thereof) have in a few years, I may say months, outgrown their teachers, (in their own judgments) and have thought almost none of them, good and meet enough, or sufficient for them: and therefore some of them have given themselves (as they say) to grow by their private reading, when they might have been taught also in the public assembly: which some of them refuse to do, especially by the ministry of such as they are exasperated against: and so, for the serving of their own cankered humor, they sin against God in breaking one of the greatest commandments. I give herein a taste of the rest of their qualities of like sort: Is this behavior seeming Christians?

To whom may be referred these, who go for zealous persons, who live inordinately, without attending upon any honest trade, idle, unprofitable, busy bodies, and counting it godliness to talk of the

faults of others; yea and oftentimes speak to please such as are in the company, and this not by unawares, or suddenly, at someone time; but oft, and without any hearty repentance (for then they would amend:) which when they have done, how can they deserve any such name of reverent Christians, or to be so accounted? When they, who will be thought forwarder then other, shall not look also, that they live more without offense then other, but in their dealings one with another shall be worse than civil men, who have no religion: what a reproach is it to then? When there shall be contending in words, bitterness, open brawls, unseemly crowing's one over another, casting one another in the teeth with their infirmities, reporting in all companies what wrongs they have sustained one by another, laughing for joy when they are fallen, whom they dislike; when there shall be froward and currish answers, taking all things in the worst part, and for no persuasion, remitting anything of their uttermost due, toward such as be in their danger. What reckoning is to be made of their religion? When men will be taken for earnest professors, and yet they shall be found hollow, and double in their dealings, one speech to some, and at some time, but contrary at other times, to other persons; and so be void of plain dealing: so that for commodity, they depart from manifest duty. What are they in respect of that which they do pretend? When they dare yet feed their eyes with unchaste looks, thereby making way to the defiling of their bodies, when they will nourish the occasions thereof, although not so openly, as others do, by company, talk, amorous looks, lascivious and wanton stage-plays: and to conclude, when they carry about them such other bad qualities, though more subtly covered and secretly hidden in them; let no such please themselves in their serving of God, by praying, hearing the word, or in the best things that are in their lives, for all their hope is but deceivable; they are grossly guilty of great ungodliness, the which the true Christian hath banished from his life and renounced.

Now if this sort (partly mentioned already, and partly to be mentioned) who (I must needs say for some religious duties which they do) come most near of all other to the godly life (as no doubt they do) do yet fail of it, and have little part in it: I shall not need to show how far others (of what profession soever they be) are off from it, I mean Papists, the Family of love, which sect are no better than colored Atheists; or any other such: of whom, as a matter needless, I will now be silent.

For the benefit and good of the offenders whom I have bewrayed, and to gather into a sum, that which I have said of the renouncing of inward and outward evils: this I say, if by any means, I may set before their eyes, and persuade them, how odious their estate is (and I say it in compassion of them) that neither the inward rebellious lusts, which I have spoken of, nor the outward behavior which I have mentioned, is any way or in any manner beseeming the Christian man. But whiles the Lord urgeth this at his people's hands, that they have no fellowship with such unfruitful works of darkness, but cleanse themselves from all that is evil, both of soul and body: so long shall it be reproachful for all which rejoice in the name of Christians, to be either in their hearts stained with such corruptions, or in their lives defiled with such treacheries. Which being so, is it not to be wondered at, especially, seeing the will of God is so clearly revealed, that this should be so harsh and unsavory a thing; yea and foolish even among such as will be thought zealous, that we should so particularly sift ourselves from these, when yet the Lord by the Prophet requireth that this be done again and again, saying, Soph. 1. Fan yourselves, fan yourselves, O nation not worthy to be loved? It is manifest in the better sort of those forenamed, that in their particular actions, and daily course of their lives, there is small moderation of their affections, and unbridled desires, or watchfulness over them: so that well-ordered government is as far

off: and therefore rash and indiscreet going about their matters is almost everywhere to be seen, which, beside offense to God and men, bringeth bitter repentance (if any) to themselves.

Bear with me (gentle Reader) though I go far and abide long in them; it may be some shall take more good at the hearing of them, and their hearts more relent, then ever they could be brought to do at the committing of them. Such frowardness, heartburning, and most sore broils there are one against another, and that for trifles: such earnestness is also in their worldly dealings: and yet deadness of heart, and little courage in matters of the soul: such nimbleness and unweariedness in the one, and such tediousness and irksomeness in the other, that all which see their conversation in the one and the other, would guess that the things which they contend about, were matters of life and death, the other very light and of small reckoning: such griping of the poor and needy, in their sales, covenants, and other dealings, especially not forgoing or yielding the least piece of their right (be their necessity never so great) nor any regard had of their distressed estate, who can think of it without lamentation? Such giving men's selves the bridle in their merry makings (I speak still of such as favor the Gospel) to talk what they will, so as it be not merely impious, how unprofitable soever it be to edifying or hurtful to example, when yet for every idle word men shall give an account: when as also such times of friendly meetings should be used for the gaining of one another to God, or confirming one another in their most holy faith, as also for the provoking to love. Such unquietness in the governors of families, for everything that is not to their liking, as petty losses, and discommodities in house, or without, by neighbors or servants, when yet their own unruly hearts and impatience do make their losses far greater than they are, and they should have learned to be prepared in the day for the troubles thereof: (I understand this of professed Christians) let such as exceed



these in evil, little rejoyce in themselves. Such broils and breach of duty betwixt husband and wife, such strife, and oft contentions, that every small occasion of dissenting one from another about anything, must bring peevishness, heartburning, strangeness, sourness; yea and oft times absence from bed and board: so that they must commonly have a day of debating the case before it can be forgotten and digested: who can think, how common it is, without deep bewailing it? And where more agreement is betwixt couples, yet to mark how little one is the better for the other, to Godward in knowledge, faith, amendment, meekness, patience, by reading, praying, communing together, and watching over one another, for their mutual good (which yet they should do to others) and therein be helps each to other, as well as in things of this life: to mark, I say, how little good is done betwixt them, is it not worthily to be complained of? And yet of these two things the latter is thought needless to be urged, as though weightier matters were in hand always: the former is defended, that sometime jars must needs be, and it cannot be otherwise, and therefore not to be spoken against.

Again, in such as receive the Gospel with good liking: how doth the pride of life (I mean jollity in earthly things) bear sway in them, the fittest bane of many other to poison them? What resting of themselves is there in the commodities, pleasures, preferments of this life (which yet they may lose ere tomorrow) in ease and prosperity, in wife, children, friends (great benefits no doubt) and in that which they have? And in the sumptuous appareling of themselves, thinking themselves thereby, to be others then they are; and therein not only to impoverish themselves, but in all outlandish and monstrous manner to disguise themselves, thinking that others admire them as greatly, as they do themselves: how do they fill their hearts with these, and please themselves therein, I say not till they displease God, but till they are eaten up of the love of them; yea and

their religion so quailed and cooled in them, that ye may easily see, that they love darkness more than light, and pleasures more than God, howsoever they hold still with the Gospel, least their iniquity should be too manifest to them? I may say, as many have confessed, and I hope by this, and such like remembrance, some other will be admonished to remember, consider, and confess, that they have so offended in some of these, that their consciences have accused them, that the life thus led is not the life which God requireth, nor these are not the works which faith affordeth: neither is this a denying of themselves, to give all to themselves, which heart wisheth, or eye lusteth after: neither is this to take up their cross daily, that is, receive meekly the troubles which God sendeth them, without which yet, they cannot follow Christ, nor be his disciples.

What should I speak of them, who although they will boldly affirm, that they will not bear with the sin of any, (no not their own children) to offend God for their sakes; yet will take part with them having done wickedly, and bolster them up, when they should be punished, though it be to the offense of many? What grievous eye sores are they to many, who suffer such as are under their government, not only to run after their pleasures at such times as they should serve God, and neither teach them their selves, nor bring them where they may be taught, but also are privy to their stealing of their neighbors commodities: yea, bear their sauciness, stoutness, and malapertness, and annoy other with such intolerable burdens, until they be check mate with the most ancient elders; and at last, come to a fearful end themselves, and kill their parents with sorrow and grief? But alas, what end is there of complaining, (I say again, not of irreligious, profane and blockish men, but of such as look verily to be saved) if I should not pluck my pen from paper? For I have said nothing of the hollowness in friendship among Christians, as they are accounted: how their love is mixed with much dissimulation in word only, not in

heart and in deed: and how hardly credit may be given to their fair words, or countenances? But as for fashion they were showed; so according to the fashion of the world, they are changed into another affection, then they promised: I have not mentioned many of the strong corruptions and rank rebellions breaking out in some Christians, and those of no common hope among their brethren.

I have scarcely mentioned this, what deadly suspicions and hard conceiving's they have of many, better men then themselves; how imperiously they judge, and master-like they censure them, whom they are not worthy to live with: when yet it is given us in charge, that we be not many masters: yea, and these faults are committed many times, when no occasion is given; which maketh their sin the greater: and if there were any, yet meekness and lenity, which should be in all reprovers, might easily remove them, whereas froward and uncharitable condemning doth no good. A poison which dwelleth; as I have said, most principally in the Schismatics of our time, and such as have leaned that way: who if they had not deceived themselves, in thinking themselves the most zealous of others, they should have allayed the bitterness of their stomachs with humility and love, whatsoever they think of themselves. But here an end of these things.

## **CHAP. 11.**

Of certain objections raised from the former doctrine, and answers thereto: as why we should put differences betwixt men: and whether the godly may fall reproachfully, and what infirmities they may have.

But me thinks I hear some objecting thus: what? Are all damned, and out of the estate of grace, which commit any of these sins? And may not many of these offenders notwithstanding their faults, be the children of God? And if men commit such faults, do they not (think we) repent afterwards? (I say, if they do, that objection is answered) Also they say, they cannot abide that such differences should be made of men. And have the godly, whom ye shoal out of others, no faults, but are they without infirmities? Are they so pure, that they live not as other men? And do not their lives gather up the common sins of the time, as holy as they be? And do they not lie in them also for a season, as well as they who are not thought so holy? Which if it be so, why should we have such differences of men? Why should one be shoaled from the other? I answer, as for differences of men they are put, by the Lord himself, both in name, conversation, and reward: to the Thessalonians, he saith: The Lord shall recompense tribulation to them which trouble his: but to those which are troubled, peace and rest: and the end of the Ministry is to shoal God's elect and beloved ones from the world, and to bring them to his sheepfold.

As concerning infirmities, it is defended by no Christian, that the most godly which live here, are void of them, but rather confess that they be burdened sore with the weight of them: and so may they be, although these foul evils be not common with them, nor long lien in of them, which I have spoken of; of whose infirmities I will say more, when I have satisfied in some sort these objections.

Therefore where it is demanded, if they be not partakers of the same sins, that other men are; I deny not, but that it is possible for them in some sort, and for a time, to be carried after the stream of the evil example of so many, which are in the world so common, and almost universal: for the best live, where Satan's throne is, (even as the

Israelites and the Egyptians dwelt together:) whose unsavory and stinking breath, what marvel were it, if the whole and sound should be infected with it? And further, as they may possibly have their part in the sins of the ungodly; so I deny not, (if God bear not the greater authority with them, and be not the more regarded of them) but that they may also lie still in the same loathsomeness for a season, though smally to their comfort. This to be true, both lamentable examples of the Scripture do show in Noah, Lot, David, and Peter: and woeful experience among us in all ages do testify. But what then? Are they therefore given over of the Lord to lie and abide in them, and being washed to wallow again in the mire?

And as I deny not but that it may be possible, and is too clear by woeful experience, that the best may be snared with the sins of others; so yet, I say, that when they fall, it appeareth plainly, that it was the subtle malice of the devil, watching his opportunity so narrowly, that he deceived them, rather than that they were given over like wicked men; to lie therein, and to add sin to sin without combat and conflict, as though they had made a league with sin, and were without God in the world, as the other be. And the rather I say this, because when they have been awaked, and come to themselves again, they are so strangely amazed at their offense, and so tremble to think what they have done, and can have no peace within themselves until they return: and that after they have got out, they are made more wary and vigilant against the like another time: the which of the wicked cannot be said, in any of their repenting's, till God change their hearts in deed, although in sudden, and rash fear they may be flighted, till it vanish away again like smoke, and so come to nothing.

Last of all, when have they fallen dangerously, who had so well begun? Hath it been, while and when they have held on in their

course of Christian duty? Have they been violently carried from the platform and direction of a godly life, whether they would or no, as not knowing what they did? Or how they were brought to it? Yea rather, have they not at such times given themselves the bridle, and suffered their minds to run too far, after that which they took pleasure in, and offended by? And have they wisely avoided the occasions of such mischief and danger at such times, as they usually were wont? Neither object here, that a man cannot be at all times watchful: and the wisest shall or may be sometimes overcome? I answer: were they wary, but as they have been usually, in which times they were preserved from such reproachful falls? For if it were so with them, they could not thus offend: but if they have been weary of God's governing of them, and have thought long till they have gotten more liberty to the flesh; and to be at their own hand with the world, and to count stolen waters sweet: it is no marvel though they have smarted with Dinah, for ranging and seeking to have their will amiss: for if his own children provoke him, he must punish even their sins with the rod, and their offenses with the scourge, till they return and say, we have sinned.

God hath promised to keep us in all our ways, wherein he appointeth us to walk, and whiles our minds are leading us thither, we are in no danger, and he hath promised us strength to walk in them. But if we will run out of our bounds, with Shemeia, where our own hearts tell us that we are in danger, is it any wonder, if afterwards it take hold of us? And was it not thus with that dear servant of God, whom the Scripture commendeth by this title, that he was a man according to God's mind? That when that one time befell, (more to his reproach, then all other) he was found to give himself the bridle of unlawful liberty, and to shaking off the secret reign of holy fear, more than usually he did. And who denieth but that in such a case, if they refuse to stand upon their watch, they may become like other men? But yet

for all that, is there great difference betwixt the one and the other, as hath been said: the one offending in that sort, seldom, neither then long lying therein: the other making it his practice to break out, one way or other. And therefore we must know, that when we have obtained once to believe, and thereby to have our poisoned hearts purged and made clean, as it is the greatest of all other benefits; so it is and may be kept, by such means as God hath provided, and not lost anymore, but confirmed and continued in the fear of God. But then, as we be one with Christ, and partakers of him, and as branches of a vine, which suck our sap and draw our spiritual strength and nourishment from him: so it is required of us (and we willingly yield to it) that we hold fast the beginning of our abiding in him, that is, our faith, unto the end, and that we take heed that there be not at any time in us an evil and corrupt heart, which will make us fall from the living God, to our own deceitful imaginations and desires, and so to fall dangerously, and to purchase heaviness thereby, our bellies full.

And this let everyone endeavor to do, and he shall see himself so strongly fenced, that through God's blessing, which faileth not in such a case, he shall be free from the diet of the careless livers (who are every while shaken) because they who walk uprightly, walk safely: but he that perverteth his ways, God will find him out, Prov. 10:9. For whereas many of God's beloved ones procure sore wounds in their lives, and anguish thereby, it is but the fruit of their own labors, who will not be held within holy compass, but plead for some unlawful liberty, and count it strictness more than needeth (by hearkening too much to the unruly flesh) to tie themselves to any certain directing of themselves in his service, (when yet his service is perfect freedom) whose evils I defend not: but yet I say, as I have said, if they be his, they shall rise and repent with Peter, if they have fallen with him, when yet the wicked shall lie still and wax worse.

But ye demand, and would needs have me answer, whether I can warrant such as fear God, that they shall never fall into some reproachful and dangerous evil, as other men do, as well as they may break out some other ways. If I might answer a wise and sober demander, I would not refuse to speak my mind; although it may in part be gathered by that which I have said already: unto such a one therefore I say (for if any other see his own practice not to agree with my answer, let him impute it to his own sin rather than to my rashness) I say therefore, seeing rare and dear servants of God have fallen thus into shameful sins, it may seem scarce possible for the best in these latter times, being far inferior to some of them in grace, to be free from the like fearful falls. But yet we must know, that some other of his good people God hath preserved from that kind of shameful sins and stains, as Enoch, Abraham, Caleb, Joshua, with many others: and therefore it may of us be hoped for, especially seeing it is no other thing then we are commanded to have special regard and care of: that is, to live without just reproach in the midst of a crooked generation and unstained. Saint Peter saith, If ye have these things, ye shall never fall: that is, dangerously, to take any great hurt thereby.

Therefore by these, and such other persuasions, we ought to be encouraged; for to us there is good hope to obtain grace hereunto. But seeing all God's children cannot alike be persuaded, that they ought to give all diligence hereunto; even that they may be unrebukable amongst men, as Paul did, and so taught other to do; but think it impossible to live so constantly, but that they shall sometime break out dangerously: Therefore such must be taught wisdom by experience, and some of them being more proud then others, must have their pride humbled, and healed by such medicines: for grievous falls are physic for pride; and many who have some grace, but not the grace which is sufficient for them, are



dangerously proud, because they have not fallen shamefully, that is, into some odious crime: and yet they have fallen shamefully (if they could see it) in that they are dangerously proud: If God therefore seeth it meet to abate their pride thereby, they may possibly fall after such a manner. Or if it be for the more manifesting of his glory in forgiving them so great a trespass, they may also fall dangerously.

This doth our merciful father see expedient oftentimes, as both in Peter and David it came to pass, as also in others: who doubtless loved the Lord, more than some others of his faithful people, which never fell in that manner (as Peters answer, and David's Psalms do clearly testify) yea, and such loved him the more, Luk. 7:47, even for that very cause, seeing they obtained mercy against so great sins of theirs, and fearful iniquity.

Yea and to add a third end, God is highly magnified by others, which know and see this, that he hath forgiven so great offenses, in such as have fallen grievously: who otherwise beholding the heavenly course of such excellent servants of his, how holy and sincere it was (save in some such offense) should have been utterly discouraged, yea and like to have despaired of their own good estate: and the rather for the high opinion that they conceived of them, if they had not seen or heard of these their falls. For these causes therefore the Lord may, and often hath, let some of his dear servants fall dangerously: first, for the humbling of them: and secondly, for that they may see his exceeding bountifulness in pardoning so great sins; that they may love him the more: and thirdly, that others far weaker then they, yet faithful, may be encouraged to believe that their sins shall be pardoned, and their weak service accepted of him; for as much as they have seen that God hath pardoned great offenses in some, otherwise far more excellent then they: which if they were not persuaded of, should be discouraged much, because of the great

graces and gifts in them, far exceeding those which are in themselves.

And otherwise, or in other respects, they need not fear that God taketh any pleasure to cast them down, who desire to stand (when his property is rather to raise up them that are fallen:) or that he seeketh every advantage, against their infirmities, who doth not look straitly what is done amiss of them; but help their weakness, supply their wants, and deliver them from such dangers, as they fear, so far as it is expedient; or else make them able to bear them. For proof whereof, they may remember, how he kept them, when they had small skill or ability to keep themselves, after that they first embraced his promises: will he not much more keep them safe, now they have experience of his kindness, and the power of Christ working in them? Nay, that which is more, when they were his enemies, he gave his son to die for them: and now they are reconciled unto him, and approved of him, as his beloved ones, shall they not much more be preserved (by his living in glory) from the fearful judgments, which in his wrath he executeth against the ungodly of the world?

Therefore if thou beest grounded and established in faith, and holdest fast the beginning of thine ingrafting into Christ, be of good comfort, thy greatest danger is past: for can he that loveth thee dearly, mean hardly against thee? Is there with him yea and nay, with whom there is no shadow of change? The Lord witnessing to that which I say, with reverence and thankfulness believe it: either thou shalt not fall reproachfully; or if thou doest, it shall be thus, as I have said, even so as it shall turn to thy good: and it need to be to thy great good, which cannot be without the great offense of so many as shall know it. For though such as shall perish may turn this which I say, to their own great hurt, as they do the Scriptures also (seeing to

the unclean all things are unclean:;) yet if thou shouldest slide, the Lord would hold thee up, and make thee stand more constantly after. The world seeth no whit of this, but counteth it all arrogancy, boasting, and falsehood, because indeed they believe no more than they see, or then their reason and fleshly wisdom can pry into; which is an utter enemy to this heavenly truth: but O faith, what precious secrets art thou able to reveal to us of God's mind and will? And how safe is he (yea in this dangerous wilderness of the world) in whom thou dwellest, seeing the Lord hath said: This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith?

And this for answer to these objections: Now as I have promised, I will shut up this part of Christianity, concerning the renouncing of inward and outward evils, concluding what infirmities the godly shall be subject unto: which shall both sufficiently prove, that they count not themselves without sin, as they are charged by many: yet for all this, that they are not companions with the ungodly in harboring and nourishing these worldly lusts and ungodliness, which I have spoken of. The less shall need to be said of this, seeing it may, and that not obscurely, be gathered, by that which hath been set down: both that they do not (with the Puritans) dream of any such perfection, but that when they have done all, they are unprofitable servants, and say with the Apostle: Oh wretched men that we are! And also, further then they are glad to be ruled by God, they fear the same falls that others do. But because they are not all spiritual, that is, spiritually minded wholly and altogether, as they are not wholly flesh, that is, corrupt, but both these contraries fighting together (as the Apostle saith) one against the other, are in their souls: therefore it cometh to pass, that they are subject through this concupiscence and infection which is in their flesh, both to the devils suggestions, and delusions of the world, and they may be carried after diverse and strange lusts, and to commit outward sins one after another further forth, then by

the grace of God's spirit their corruption be bridled, held back, and subdued. But if that grace be quenched or quailed, then evil desires are kindled, and gather strength to bring forth fruit accordingly.

And this may be, yea and no doubt is, the estate of the many of God's servants: such especially, as for want of good experience, and acquaintance in the Christian life, and battle, are more easily deceived, and beguiled then others are. And hereof it is, that many have been overtaken, and oft do slide, and fall dangerously, and are carried from keeping a good conscience, and from well doing: And diverse commit those sins which they had long abstained from, hoping that they should never have fallen into them anymore: But what then? Are they therefore like to the sundry sorts of the former wicked ones, of whom I spake before? No, nothing less: for either they are wary and watchful against them, beforehand, least they should fall; and it is their greatest care, that they may not fall into them: or when they see how they have been overcome, and deceived, they lay it to heart by and by, bewail it, and are much humbled to see how they have been circumvented, and cannot be quiet, whiles they seeing God offended, are not reconciled to him again. And on the contrary, if they prevail over their sins, and hold under their affections, and keep their consciences excusing them, that so they may walk with God and abide in his favor; then are they more joyful than they, who have all that their hearts can wish. And although all have not the like knowledge, how to do and go about it; yet it is the earnest desire of their heart to have it so: In token whereof, even the weakest which are new borne, are heavy and cannot be comforted, for that they see continually how they have displeased God.

And to this purpose I might say much more, whereby all that can judge, may see, that these sins are of infirmity committed by them: and that they are haled and drawn to do such things, as in no wise

they would, when they are come to themselves, and when the spirit of God overruleth and subdueth their loose and ranging affections: neither would they have been carried after them, even then when they were hailed to the committing of them, but that they were weak to perform that, which fain they would have done. I say, who doth not see, that these men sin not like the other, but in such wise as the best, and dearest of God's children in all ages have done, who never fully satisfied themselves (no not the best of them) in that which they did.

And this is properly sin of infirmity, when partly of knowledge, but more through frailty, an offense is wrought to the displeasing of God: and when of such a one it is committed, as because he hath his heart sanctified, would not do it: and yet because the power of corruption at that time is greater in him, then the strength of grace, therefore he was overcome of it, and forced to yield to it.

But I demand whether any such combat or conflict be found in the ungodly, and workers of iniquity, in them of whom I have before spoken. Have they fear before the sin committed, lest they should fall into it? But by what sign do they prove it, and by what reason can they persuade it? Who neither watch against it, neither have their hearts out of love with it: nay they are so far from striving against it, that they are set on fire to commit it, and would hate him deadly, which should earnestly dissuade, much more withhold them from the committing of it: or do they after the committing of it, bewail it for that God was offended thereby, and for their unkindness against his majesty, and for his dishonor thereby? It may be for fear of hell, and damnation, if they be nearly urged, and lest it should come to light, and so bring reproach and punishment upon them; They may bow themselves like a bulrush for a season. Which kind of men (that I may prove it to be true, which I say of them) when that pang and

qualm is over, are not only merry and quiet again, when yet they have no word of comfort from God, but are ready to the like sin again; yea and many of them commit it again indeed a little while after.

But will any call this, wholesome and Godly sorrow which bringeth repentance? Alas! It is as far from it, as is the East from the West. Neither have they any strife or combat before, or after the committing of sin, as distracted in themselves for that, which they have done; or fearful, least they should commit the evil which they go about, further than this, that their conscience may secretly tell them it is evil: but they repel it, and will in no wise hear the same: And therefore they sin not, as God's children do; that is, by infirmity. And thus much for answer to the former questions: And of the first part of godliness also of the life of the believer, this be said.

## **CHAP. 12.**

Of the keeping of the heart once purged, in the good same plight afterward.

Now I having showed how God maketh the heart new, and changeth it, before it be fit to be employed in well doing, and in bringing forth fruits of amendment; and also how it being changed, renounceth evil both inward and outward: we must know how to keep it in good plight afterward; that so we may be able from time to time, to continue that course which by the first change was begun, and so to do any such duties as we are bound to perform: which otherwise cannot be. For as vessels, which have been unsavory, are not only once seasoned, but kept sweet afterwards, that they may be fit for use; and as men use to purge their springs from that which might stop them: so are our hearts to be preserved in the same sort, that

they become not bitter and corrupt, as of themselves naturally they are prone to be. For the best have need of this help whiles they carry flesh about them, therefore much more young beginners. It is the Lord's commandment, that when our hearts are once cleansed, we should keep them so with all diligence, that is, watch, try, and purge them from all defilements, whereby they are wont to be tainted, and poisoned. We must watch them, least we should, for want thereof, be deceived with the baits of sin: we must examine and try them, seeing no man can watch so carefully, but that much evil will creep in: and we must purge out that filthy dross of concupiscence which we find by examining, that it set not our will on fire to satisfy, and perform the desires thereof.

And the man of God, who was best acquainted with the heart among many thousands, both how evil it is, and how it is in the best manner to be looked unto and preserved, he hath taught the same: that the servant of God, who hath by his mercy his former life purged by the forgiveness of his sins, must keep it from new infections hereafter, by taking heed, and looking to the same, according to God's word.

This is plain to them that have experience in the Christian life, that men walking among so many snares of the devil, baits of the world, and meeting with so infinite rebellions, and lusts of their own hearts, as cannot be expressed, but as we find them out by observing them, are not without continual danger and hurt, if they be not acquainted with this holy watch and ward, that their knowledge may be as a light to them in this dark world, and their provident care as a preservative from the infection of sin, which in all their dealings will meet with them: yea and (that I say nothing of them, who are without Christ in it) even the believers themselves (I mean) do find much annoyance, and discomfort in their lives, which neither they needed to fear,

neither should find, if this counsel of the Prophet were precious to them.

And to this end, that they who have their hearts thus cleansed, as I have said, may continue them so still, they must know that it is no idle occupation thus to do: but they must be content and glad to wean their hearts from many unprofitable, and wandering thoughts and desires, which hold them here below, and with the which others are carried away, as with a whirlwind: and to season them with holy and heavenly meditations, as namely, of God's goodness, of their own frailties, and of their duties; that by the help of these, they may the better contain themselves within their bounds, and break not forth into dangerous evils. These are especial helps for the well ordering of their hearts still, who have at any time brought them in order already: this being added, that their reading privately, their hearing publicly, with their oft and earnest prayers, and Christian conferences be wisely, and at due times adjoined hereunto: of the which here is no fit place to give any rules more particularly, because I have appointed to direct men how to use these, when I shall come to speak of the helps and means which are to be used for the well governing of their hearts and lives, in the next treatise.

And thus the heart being renewed and kept, it is easy to renounce evil, which otherwise is impossible: for everyone that listeth may see, both by Scripture, Psalm. 32:4, 5, 6. Hebr. 10:38, and by experience (notwithstanding our affections are strong, unruly, and most hardly subdued) with what ease we may renounce and forsake them, and have power over our will and appetites, when our hearts be thus renewed and kept mastered: That is to say, when first they are purged, and our corrupt nature changed into a better by believing the forgiveness of our sins, and a partaking of the graces of Christ, and after, watched over and observed that they continue so: who doth not



see that the stubbornnest and wilfullest heart which hath most rebelled against good instruction and reformation, yet when it is thus looked unto, will be tamed? And to speak more particularly (for the weak Christians sake) when a man hath once felt damnation, the just reward of such a course; and on the other side full deliverance from the same to be freely given him of God: and thus hath his heart humbly turned towards God again to love, and delight in him: who doth not see (I say) that such a man daily having in remembrance this unspeakable kindness of God towards him, and the woeful estate that he was in otherwise; that he will be loath to displease this his so gracious God? Who doth not see, but that his heart also having sustained so many checks from God, for the disorders of it, and accusations, for the manifold evils of it, and that he weaning it daily from the old lusts thereof, and seasoning it with grace by faith received daily, which vanquisheth them, and inuring it with the helps that may nourish it from time to time; but that it shall with great ease serve God in this life, and have nothing the toil and labor that others have, in the going about any good duty, or resisting any sin? Let men say what they will, it is the evil governing of the heart, and letting it loose to folly, wanderings, and needless phantasies, that causeth it to be surfeited with all manner of iniquity; and the most know not their hearts how deceitful, corrupt, and unholy they be: I speak not only of the wicked of the world, as the reader may see, I am fain often to put him in mind, but even of those whom God hath separated from the profane sort to serve him. And although, according to that which they know of the will of God, they have some care to avoid offenses; yet do not many of them seek, nor set themselves to know that which they might, of God, nor of their own duties: neither to grow forward in many good things, as they might do, believing assuredly that God will supply their wants, and help their infirmities, as he would they should; but rather do many things to the great offense of others, and all for that they are so little

acquainted with their hearts (which (in many) are touchy, froward, willful, worldly in a dangerous manner) nor with God's mind and will: by means whereof, some maintain dangerous opinions: As that the law, in no wise, is to be preached; that Papists and Protestants disagreeing in fundamental points of religion, may yet agree together, and be saved, and such like. Many also wax secure and slothful, and that in no common sort, and otherwise blemished dangerously more then with common frailties: and are not, for the most part, roused up, but by some of God's sharp chastisements, as in taking away their dear friends from them: afflicting their own bodies with some sore sickness, disease, and fear of death, their minds with darkness and ignorance, fear of God's wrath and heaviness, which they thought sometime should never have taken hold of them. The use of the which being learned by the word, they are much checked and humbled to remember their boldness, pride, and other faults: and somewhat quickened by a lively hope, that God will again be entreated: also their hearts be brought to stoop and bow to the will of God, more meekly and readily, and not so stiffly to stand in their own conceit, as before they did. After this manner, God is forced to call back many of his: but had it not been better for them, without these sharp corrections, to have made it their meat and drink before, to please him in all things? But thus, their hearts being enlarged and enlightened, they see themselves readily to withstand sundry temptations, which before they did so hardly resist and gainsay, that they found it a continual irksomeness and toil to go about it: or (that which was worse) through hardening of their hearts, they would not see them at all, which was a sore blemish unto them.

Now these and such like, will any say, outstrayings in them, till God by chastisements call them back again, that they be not the fruits of an ill ordered heart? Even as I said before, it is the ill governing of

the heart, that causeth such excrements to come from it, and such disguising of the person, in whom it breaketh out so offensively; the which therefore had need to be looked unto with all holy and religious care: which is the point now in hand. And although it be the exceeding favor of God, to correct such faults in his children, and to purge them out and amend them by some fatherly afflictions, rather than they should remain to the utter ruin of the persons: yet had it not been much better, that they should never have given occasion thereof? And that they had been careful to keep themselves within compass, as some other of their brethren do? Who though they be not (no not the best of others) exempt from the common frailties of God's elect, yet do they so labor to espy, hinder, and hold their corruptions under, in secret sifting them, and suing unto God with groans and requests; that they break not forth openly to the just offense of others, at least rarely: so that it may be seen, they keep their hearts with all observation and diligence, more than the other do.

And yet for all that hath been said, I deny not, but that the dearest children of God may possibly, nay easily, as we have seen, and are at some time holden under this bondage by Satan's subtlety, some more than others: so that for a time they shall be more drowned in the love of earthly things, or be carried away by those which are sinful, then obtain a delight in heavenly. But by the spiritual armor of Christians, if they be once well exercised in it, they may and do thus far prevail, that they recover themselves again, and get superiority over their hearts, and find and feel that God is chief, and all in all with them, to delight and joy in him (as I do not see why it should be otherwise with any such as have truly tasted how good the Lord is ) and then they shall cut off numbers of such earthly and noisome pleasures, as they were wont to solace themselves with amiss, before they considered more advisedly of it. But will any gather, that I do make

so light a matter of sin (whiles I thus speak) as though I thought, it might be shaken off as a burr hanging on our garment; which the holy Ghost saith, cleaveth fast to us, and is ever about us? For I know sin is raging, and the devil is strong as a lion in his suggestions and assaults, and hardly gainsaid, showing himself as an Angel of light, and we silly to discern, and weak to resist: yet this I must say, that the mighty Lion of the tribe of Judah is stronger, and Christ giveth wisdom to find out his subtleties: and greater is the spirit of God which is in us, if we confidently believe and trust thereto, then the sin which deceiveth and enticeth us to the same.

But we have not this grace (ye will say) and therefore what is it to us? We have had it (I say again, so many as I speak of) and have been taught, and have a promise to overcome by faith: and therefore we may do so still: and that better and better every day, the more experience we have. And although, I grant that these things are hard to such as are not thoroughly seasoned with the knowledge of this doctrine, nor instructed oft, and made familiarly acquainted with the will and loving kindness of God (whose case is much to be pitied, and their growing's cannot be great) yet it is most certain, that where these things are often taught, and understood, it shall go far better with them then with others. And they shall with ease get victory over their special corruptions, as sloth, distrust, and such like: where as they, who are not acquainted and seasoned with them, shall not have experience of God's power in helping them to overcome the same; but be servants unto them, which they might otherwise have mastered. Examples hereof, as we have many; so that of David doth declare it, when he was constrained to cry out of it, saying: Against thee (O Lord) I offended, and did this great evil: as if he should have said; my sin had never broke out openly in the sight of men, if I had not let loose my heart first, in the sight of God.

Such government therefore, as every of God's servants according to the measure of their knowledge, may have over their hearts, I wish might be kept and continued: which doubtless, although it overcome not all temptations; yet should it weaken them very much, and diminish their strength, so that the cursed fruits of them should not so easily, nor so often break fourth to annoy them. The good treasury of the heart if it were carefully kept, would bring forth better things. If ye ask what; my meaning is, not, that only in the exercises of religion, as prayer, reading and hearing, we should have help and furtherance thereby, to worship God fervently (which commodity were not small) but in our common actions, affairs, and business, we should reap the benefit thereof. For though it be no common thing to be found in the world; yet if men had a continual care over their hearts, to keep them well ordered, they should show it in their talk and dealings: at the market, in their buying's and selling's, in their families, and among their neighbors, as well as among strangers, and in all things about which they may lawfully be occupied. In all these, I say, men should behave themselves plainly and simply; justly, peaceably, patiently, meekly, kindly, gently, faithfully, temperately, and humbly, (of what state and degree so ever they be, and yet without any disgrace to them; nay the greatest honor and credit) yea and mercifully also, as occasion should be offered: which (I think) if they were found in Christians (as, where else are they to be looked for?) they would no less joy the hearts of them who should behold them, then adorn and beautify them, who should be patterns of them. And who can say otherwise, but that it were a little heaven, to deal with, and live among such? Even as we see it is a piece of hell, to dwell with them that are of the contrary disposition: As Jacob must have been constrained to abide with Esau, and as God's people in their captivity, did with the Edomits. God of his singular love (I confess) restraineth many from the excess of evil, that they would otherwise do: seeing otherwise, none could be able to live by them:

But whereas some are thus bridled by good laws, and some for shame and vain glory, do depart from much iniquity; and thus patch up a kind of life among men: yet know they, that without religion (that is, a fear of breaking out of Christian bounds) which only is to be found in an heart well governed) they shall never please God, nor have favor nor approbation, no not even of common men. But of this we may complain and cry out, till we have worn our tongues to the stump, without redress. For the fowl stains, and shameful blots which are contrary to the forementioned virtues, are still usual (as they have been) almost everywhere, both in many of the ministry and people, and so will be; as though godliness were tied to the Church walls, and to the pulpit. And for a further illustration and proof of the benefit of the well guiding of the heart, this I have said.

Thus we may see that the heart being well ordered, will neither suffer the affections to stray far, nor willingly harbor evil lusts: and though they may creep in by stealth; yet by examination, we shall find out many of them, and shall be ready, when they are found, to purge them out, and expel them also, before they shall (being so nestled in us) be able to poison our lives. Oh gain invaluable! For who can say less of it? That by the benefit of a well-ordered heart, we may conquer many dangerous sins, which others (for want of it) do usually commit, with shame and much sorrow accompanying them. Now when we see the fruit of this well seasoning and keeping of our hearts, in frame, what should be in more account with us? Yea, what should hinder it from being so? Or what should we think more needful to be done, then the laboring for it, when we see it so great a treasure; and such fearful bondage for want of it, to come upon us? But, alas, this looking to our hearts by fits, now and then, when the good mood taketh us, as it is too common, so it is most dangerous; and suffereth not Christians to see, much less to enjoy one half of the sweetness, which God bequeatheth to them: I mean, if we govern and

look to them, but as men in the world commonly look to their outward serving of God: that is, to pray when night cometh, go to the Church when the Sabbath cometh, to fast when Lent cometh, and repent when death cometh. And so the wisdom of the flesh counselleth us to look to our hearts sometime: but that we resolve and arm ourselves that the heart be thus looked to in all that we do (as frailty will permit) and care had over it, that it follow the light of knowledge going before it, oh that is thought too heavy a burden, and an estate too uncomfortable! To rejoice always, to pray continually, in all things to be thankful: as the Apostle commandeth, Ephes. 5:16. Day and night to be meditating on the word of God, and the variety of the infinite good things contained in it, and aiming at it, as at a mark, how we may walk after it: oh that is counted tediousness, and bondage intolerable! And yet none of all these precepts can be understood of the outward actions of our life, the ear, and tongue cannot do these things always: but the heart may meditate, rejoice, praise, and pray at all seasons, and upon all occasions, if once it hath gotten a pleasure in them, for it shall never want occasion. And if we can obtain to have God in our remembrance more usually than we were wont, or then others desire to do, and spend our thoughts and set our delight on him: shall we think anything too good for him? Should we not constantly take up our hearts in heavenly cogitations, as we are willed, Col. 3:2, when we see, that all other are but vanity and vexation of spirit? If it pleaseth him to ask our hearts, as he doth, when he saith, My son give me thine heart: should we not think ourselves happy that he will take anything at our hands, when David being a King, wished that he had anything that would please him? This taking up of our delight in the looking to our hearts, as we are able, should the more be sought after of us, if it were but for this cause, that if we have not rule over them in our common actions thorough our life, we cannot have them at commandment in the chief services of God. And from hence it is, that Christians of good hope,

do complain, and that oftentimes with bitterness, that their hearts are so swarming usually with vain thoughts, even whiles they are in hearing and praying: the reason is, because at other times they are usually so occupied throughout the day, feeding upon their delights, that God is almost wholly out of their remembrance, especially to direct and lead their hearts: and therefore also their actions, and speeches are much offensive in lightness, rashness, and unreverence: The which being common with them in the daily course of their life, they cannot possibly have them otherwise at hearing or praying. All which yet are contrarily done, when the strength of concupiscence, I mean, the corruption of the heart (which is without measure evil) is mortified and asswaged first; and then still subdued after and restrained, and daily seasoned with good meditations, and watched over, that it may be kept clean, and fit to duty.

And thus I conclude; that the only way to curb up, and hold in our intemperate lusts, and evil desires, that they break not out into further ungodliness, is, that our hearts be first purified through believing that our sins are forgiven us, and we made partakers of Christ his grace; and so our consciences appeased: and that they be continued in the same good order afterwards.

And they, who will not see and follow after this, but think to abstain from sinful temptations, and serve God in an honest and godly life, howsoever the heart be little looked after, shall reap a slight fruit of their travail; neither lead the life which is approved of God (as hath been said) nor find the comfort which they imagine they shall have, at leastwise which they hear, to be granted by the Lord. But it cometh to pass, as it is written, that as they serve him, so he serveth them: for as they serve not God in heart, and deed, but in word; so their peace is not in heart and deed, but in word: their joy, not in soul, but in countenance: a false comfort (and that appeareth in time of need)



as they gave to him a false worship. It is profitable for us to weigh this: for such as cry out of us, as of Precisians, for teaching and urging this, do prove, to their cost and shame oftentimes, that they had been happy if they could have received this our doctrine, howsoever they reproach and speak ill of our living. Who should not have branded themselves with sins, that they could never after wear out the stain of them anymore; if they had been as the strictest Precisians before.

It hath been showed, how the heart being kept pure and clean, the unruly desires and appetites which arise from thence, shall be kept under in us, and the power of them shaken and weakened: this is thus to be understood: that even as, if our hearts were altogether pure, all our thoughts and desires should be altogether holy, and none of them unclean: so our hearts being purified and cleansed, but unperfectly, and in part, our desires therefore cannot be (in the perfectest and best Christians) altogether good and pleasing to God, but unperfect: that is to say, many of them evil, and many which are holy, yet mixed with evil and corruption. Whereby it cometh to pass, that the holiest servants of God, both carry about them the noisome remnants of sin whilst they live, as loathsome rags (for they cleave fast unto them) and also they complain and groan under them as heavy burdens, saying, Oh wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us? And again, If thou, O Lord, shouldest look straightly what is done amiss, who should be able to abide it? This (I say) is the perfection of the best: that they, who charge us to challenge a purity to ourselves, may be ashamed. But yet least wicked and ungodly men should think this a small gift and privilege, that God's servants have in this, that they be in part renewed, and so be brought to think, that there is no great difference betwixt the godly and themselves, they are to know, that to have our hearts changed but in measure, so as it be in truth, is a benefit of greater value, then the whole world: and

what marvel if the overcoming of malice, and revenge (but one affection) be of greater value, then the winning of a City? Prov. 16:32. And whereas they think there is no difference betwixt the one, and the other, they may understand, that the meanest person having a clean heart, though not perfect, is by infinite degrees happier than the most glossing professor which wanteth it, the one saved, the other damned: as we read of the poor Publican, and the vain glorious Pharisee.

## **CHAP. 13.**

Of the sum, and manner of handling this second part of a godly life: and particularly of the rules to be observed for the effecting of it: namely, knowledge and practice.

And thus (Christian reader) I have set down to thee, one part of the life, which God requireth of thee, whosoever thou art, who lookest for salvation at his hands, being a believer in Christ's: that is, that thou shouldest renounce the evil lust which swarm everywhere in the world, and ungodly life following the same: and how this should be done, and how far thou mayest attain hereunto, even so far as man's frailty will permit, and not as the unbelievers: only be sure that thou hast this in some measure wrought in thee in truth. But in all this thou hast been taught only to cast off that which is sinful and naught; which to do, is (no doubt) a great part of godliness: but there hath been nothing said of the manifold pointes of duty on the other side, and of the goodness which is to be found in us, and in the which, God's people must shine as lights unto the world: For this is the glory and beauty of a man, as Solomon saith: That which is to be desired of a man, is his goodness. Of this life therefore, which must be wrought instead of the former evil conversation, and bringeth forth fruits of

amendment, and consisteth in the doing of good works, I am now to entreat and speak. And as this is more hard to attain to, then the other: (as hard as that is) so it is far more precious, and beautiful to be doing of good, then to avoid evil; though he is a rare man, who is not to be charged that way.

The which I say, first, that they may see what a great portion they have even in this world, whom God hath framed thereunto, how contemptible soever their estate be to them, who know it not, neither can judge of it according to the truth.

And secondly, that they, who rest in it, and can say, they hope, yea see no great evil in them, may know, that if they be not also given unto good works, the greatest perfection that they can rejoice in, is this, that they are but half Christians.

But the matter is much and large, which must needs be handled in the laying forth of this point, to show fully and clearly for the simple-hearted Christian, what this part of a godly life is: therefore I will make no longer stay in anything (as near as I can) then I must needs.

First then, I will set down some general rules to direct thee how to practice all duties commanded, which otherwise might be done to small purpose: then I will more particularly show, wherein this part of godliness, or of doing good, doth consist: that is to say, in duties of holiness to God: and in righteous dealing towards men, with reasons of both: lastly, I will answer some objections brought against the godly life.

And where I say I will give thee rules which shall help thee to practice the godly life, mark them well: for because this point is not well learned, therefore many which would gladly live well, attain to it in no good sort to bring it in credit with others, but meet with many

unsettling's, discouragements, and cooling's of their zeal, yea oft times dangerous outstrayings: neither find the going about it so pleasant, as toilsome and tedious. And it is so in great part, because it is a work whereto they have not been trained: but as they partly see by the examples of others, and partly also do guess themselves, but not able to direct their ways soundly, as God's word teacheth. Now the general rules are these: First, knowledge of duty, with a delighting therein. Secondly, practice of that which we know; the which practice or endeavoring to follow that which we know, is that living by faith, or laboring to keep a good conscience, which the Scripture so oft and diligently commendeth unto us. And for the better furthering of us herein, these virtues are necessary: uprightness, diligence, and constancy.

And to begin with knowledge, as it is in all sciences, professions and trades, that they who go about to practice therein, must needs have some clear and good understanding of those things which appertain to the same; so much more in this practice of Christian duties, it is requisite, that he who believeth in God (for such an one only can be a practicer here) should have some true knowledge, what is good and godly, that he may discern it from the contrary, and of things good, which are the best; so that by knowledge I mean, such an enlightening of the mind to understand the will of God about good and evil, that we have with it spiritual wisdom to apply and refer the same to the well ordering of our particular actions, that we rest not in seeing the truth only, but approve and allow of it, as that which is fit to counsel and guide us: but yet so, as everyone is able to conceive and attain unto that which I say, that both he may grow and increase in this knowledge, who is endued with the greatest measure of it already: and he may not be discouraged that hath any true measure of it at all. This knowledge, S. Peter saith, must be joined with faith (that particular duties, as patience, temperance, and such other like

may be practiced) and that not in the letter only, but in the spirit. And it is that, of which our Savior Christ saith: If ye know these things, happy are you if ye do them.

This heavenly understanding, if it be loved and delighted in of us, and desired as gold, and sought after as silver, and not weighed and esteemed of us, as a thing common and of no value; will with her beauty so inflame our hearts, and set us on fire with the love thereof, that we shall think long, till we have been led by it to the practicing of that which we know (being the way to the King palace) which is far more precious than the knowledge itself, and will most certainly follow the same. Therefore Solomon saith: If knowledge once enter into thine heart, and wisdom delight thy soul, then shall understanding preserve thee, and counsel shall keep and direct thee. And they who have not this knowledge in greatest account, and delight not in it, whatsoever learning, or wisdom they have, they are as far from practice of it, or bringing forth the fruit thereof in their lives, otherwise then civilly, as if they were blind and ignorant like the common sort: which in Nicodemus, a great man in Israel, and other of the Pharisees and Scribes is easy to be seen.

And this is the cause why many which are learned, and of the Ministry, or otherwise, witty, and acquainted with the Scriptures, are far from a godly life indeed, for that they have not their hearts led by God's spirit to love and delight in this knowledge of God's sacred will (unless it be for some earthly advantage, which they hope for thereby, or for vain glory) more than all other things beside: nor spiritual wisdom to square their actions thereby, to the end they may follow it as their guide in their whole course, as seeing it worthy to set their delight therein: but account that a foolish thing, and easy to be attained (when yet it is the most precious, and the hardest of all other) yea, a far more hard and difficult matter, then the getting of

all their learning by labor and study. What then do I say? That their learning and great knowledge is nothing? Or do I go about to deface and make both odious? No, I am far from it: but rather I say freely, that they are great and excellent gifts of God: and by many degrees, they may be nearer to a happy estate who have them, then such as want them.

But yet this I say, that many which have them, have not therewith that which giveth an edge to them, and which maketh them profitable, sweet, and precious both to themselves and others: they have not the salt of grace, which only maketh them savory, nor the love which only maketh them fit to edify (whereas knowledge without it, pusseth up, and the tongues of Angels to express it, were but as a tinkling cymbal:) Neither have they eye-salve to see that, except in humility they be content, yea glad to be led in their daily conversation by the light and help of the same; they have no other fruit of it then earthly and transitory: in ostentation, and comparing with others, to disgrace them, and to be counted great masters when they attain to great applause; when yet indeed many of them have not the sweet fruit of it themselves, nor show that amiable use of it to others, as some mean countrymen which labor faithfully to make conscience of that which they know. And I say with the Psalmist, that he who hath fewer gifts of understanding, so as he live after them which he hath, is wiser then they: for thus he saith: Thou hast made me wiser then my teachers, then the ancient, or men of experience, because I have kept thy commandments. Therefore with the Wiseman I conclude, that the delighting in this spiritual knowledge, which I have spoken of, is one special thing, necessary to the leading of a godly and upright life; without the which the mind is not good, and consequently the life cannot be approved: so that they, who care but little for knowledge to guide them, have as small pleasure in the godly life, whatsoever they think of themselves: to the shame of such

I speak it, who say in their hearts, they know enough for their parts (for if they knew more, they must follow more.)

Therefore condemning both bare literal knowledge, without the love of, and delighting in it; and much more the loathing and contempt of it: I proceed to show, that with such a well affected heart, we must practice that which is commanded us, that is, seek to walk worthy the Lord, and please him in all things. And this practice is the second rule to direct us to the life of the believer, and is both inward and outward: inward, when in resolution of our minds, and desire and purpose of heart we do it, Psal. 119:10, Act. 11:23. Outward, when in our lives we express and declare the same in our walking, Act. 9:31.

But to begin with the first. We must have our hearts prepared and ready to be set on work, and employed in any good service to God, or our brethren, as I showed at large before in the renouncing of evil (and therefore the less shall be spoken of it.) And this well ordering of the heart, is a most precious grace of God, as without the which, no good can be well done. But when we have such awe over our affections, as to choose, desire and delight in that which we know to be good, and as occasion shall be offered; yea and to be vehemently grieved with that which hindereth us therein: the members and powers of our minds shall be ready to put in exercise and practice the same.

Therefore this inward readiness of the mind and fervent desire of the heart (we see) must be blown up in us, and nourished as a sparkle or coal of fire: that (as it may be obtained) there may be some ability and strength thereunto. For the which cause, the Lord requireth, that we love him with all our heart, soul and might.

This strength although where it is not known, there is felt no want of it: yet such as see it requisite in their actions, do soon feel it to be

missing, and a great piece of the beauty of those works which are done without it, to be wanting. As when they are gone about coldly and in deadness of spirit: and so likewise, they can best tell, how well it beseemeth their actions, who have obtained it of God, and testify it throughout the course of their lives. For when men understand, that God hath so appointed, that they should be zealous in doing their duties, as remembering that of him they shall receive their reward, and that his business ought to be gone about fervently and with conscience; though they have no great example of such practice in the world, it will hearten them on with courage unto the same, by the help of his spirit, which leadeth thereto. And yet if the zeal of God's house consumed them, as the Prophet saith, it did him; this were no perfection, but that which ought to be labored for, as everyone may attain it; and in the whole course of men's dealings and duties to God, some measure of it: in so much, as where it is not found and enjoyed of men, they should count it their sin.

And here this one thing is to be considered, that our affections of choosing, and embracing good things be so ordered, that they may be equally more slack or strong, as the goodness of the thing shall be greater or lesser: (as in praying to God, rather than giving their due to men.) Also that (in an equal comparison) the duties of holiness to God, be preferred before duties to men: and with more bending our force and strength, when we go about to perform them, rather than these.

And if it be demanded here, how we shall come by such grace, as whereby we shall be able to embrace, choose, and follow the good, which we know: I answer: that we received such grace, when we first believed in Christ; whereby our hearts were purified, and cleansed from the strength of our old corruption: which (if we remember) doth warrant us not only, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath taken away



the guilt, and punishment of our sin, and imparted to us, and given freely his obedience; but also grace and will to love piety, and goodness; and power, as to kill sin, so to quicken us to newness of life.

So that if we feel it not usually, and ordinarily, we have lost and forgone it, either through our forgetfulness, sloth or careless negligence: or if it be through infirmity weakened in us, we ought to stir up ourselves with cheerful confidence, to the recovering of it again, and not to be content to be spoiled of so great a treasure. But if this earnest desire after goodness, and vehement zeal of honoring God by that which we know, be quenched: whether it be overwhelmed with sorrow, fear, or such like passions, or dulled and made blunt in us through lightness, and in following the desire of our hearts amiss, we are in no wise fit to honor God in any service. Thus much of the first part of practice, namely inward.

I will now go forward with the second part, which is a branch of the second rule, and helpeth forward to the leading of a godly life; that the believers may, by it, be able to guide themselves aright, and with much ease, in respect of those, who be not acquainted therewith. And this it is, that in well doing, we stay not in our good desires, and in the readiness of the heart to do good, but procure, accomplish and perform the same duties outwardly; that we endeavor at least, even where we cannot perform, as occasion shall be offered, and that in one commandment as well as in another, so far as it may be obtained. So that in all parts of sanctify and holiness, which shall be wrought in, and by us, this ought to be as a perpetual law, that all the members of our bodies, and our particular actions, may all become most fit instruments and helps to show forth, and express the same. And that is it, which the Apostle to the Romans meaneth, when he saith: Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it

in the lusts thereof, neither give ye your members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but give yourselves unto God, as they which are alive from the dead, and give yourselves as weapons of righteousness unto God.

By this we see, that not only the heart with her members, that is, the cogitations and desires in those which are justified by faith, must be consecrated to the honor and service of God, but also the body with the parts thereof; the ear in hearing, the tongue in speaking, the eye in seeing, &c. that so we should be his wholly: and in one part of our life, as well as another, do that which pleaseth him.

No man doubteth, but that we should do good works, as well as have our minds and hearts inwardly purged, but that we should be diligently given unto every good work, and make a trade of godliness, to apply and follow it; so that while we do one good duty, we should not neglect another (which in good husbandry about things of this life is much regarded:) that few will grant, or be ready to yield thereto: yea and that our conversation should be in heaven, that is, that our common course of life should be heavenly, whilst we live here upon earth: and that we should not only give no occasion of offense in anything, but also in all things seek to approve ourselves as the faithful servants of God. Thus much of the rules: the virtues which further us herein follow, which are, uprightness, diligence, and constancy or perseverance.

The first then of these virtues, which should make our practice both inward and outward more pure and perfect, is uprightness, and that is, when in a single and true heart, we love, choose and desire, and do any good thing, specially because God commandeth, and for that end. This virtue was commended by our Savior in Nathaniel, when he said: Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile. Many

actions, otherwise fervent enough, for want of this sincerity, are but froth (as were the hot enterprises of Jehu against idolaters) and cause them who have long pleased themselves therein, at length, to cry out of their doings (though admirable in the eyes of others) and to say, they were but hypocrisy.

There are many starting holes in the den of our hearts, and many ways we can deceive ourselves, that the good which we do, is not as it seemeth: but as it is not all gold that doth glister, so the touchstone of God's word doth find much dross therein: yea, the Lord's weights of the Sanctuary do prove them light and windy, which in our judgments and persuasions were weighty and substantial.

We are brought oft times to be earnest in good causes, and to further them, as for friendship of others, and for company sake: so for malice, for our commodity, vain glory, and for fear of some sore punishment or danger, if we should do otherwise: when our pretense in all these, is, that it is good, and commanded; yea and we mean well many times, and are fervent in a good thing without these evil respects; and that partly for the commandment of God: but not only, nor resolutely for that, but more for other considerations, then that: Therefore we are found to be others, then we would. Although I would not be taken, as though I should mean, that there were no uprightness, if any fear, or other fleshly respects should be mixed therewith (so as we be not ruled by them) for otherwise our best actions are mixed with corruption.

And thus I conclude this point as the former, and say with the Apostle: This shall be our rejoicing (if we have any worthy the speaking of) that in simplicity, and godly pureness we have our conversation in the world among men: This virtue therefore (I mean faithfulness, and uprightness) going with our practice, in performing

the duties which we know, shall both set ourselves about them with more roundness, and (as far as they can be discerned) shall cause them to show more beauty to others, and raise more admiration in them.

Now if this should be thought needless of some which shall read it, that I speaking of the true Christian, do urge and require uprightness and singleness of heart in practicing godliness, seeing I have said as much before in the chapter of renouncing sin: I answer, that it is alike requisite in both: and that as well we show integrity in the practice of good duties, as in the forsaking of evil. And thus with the rules, I have set down one of the virtues namely uprightness: which is necessarily to be learned and kept of all such as having obtained the gift of true faith, do set themselves to lead a godly life: I say, such as have true faith, because no other have any possibility to enter, and set upon it. And if thou thinkest to set upon the godly life without it, thou shalt offer to God a broken piece of work: no better than the offering of Cain; although it shall seem to thyself, to be as holy as the sacrifice of Abel.

But if thou hast tasted aright of this gift of faith, and then going about to lead a godly life; thou being soundly instructed in these rules, before set down, and persuaded that they with the virtues here added, must guide and help thee to the right performing of all duty; then (even as skill and understanding of the rules in any science or trade, with willingness and endeavor, maketh the workman fit to use and practice it) thou shalt find great ease, not only in withstanding the deceitful baits of sin, but also constantly break through many and diverse lets, which thou shalt meet with, that they shall not withhold thee from going forward in thy Christian course. For it is men's naked, and unarmed venturing, and going abroad in the world (which is as a shop of vanity and enticements) it is this, I say, that

maketh them come home with so many deadly wounds, fearful falls, and grievous offenses, (I speak of the better sort of people, as well as of the common professors, though the worst seldom feel them) and they shall never find it otherwise till they do better address themselves and be furnished, as hath been said, to this great work of Christianity.

But because I have appointed a more convenient place hereafter, where I shall more fully speak of the armor, which God hath prepared for the safekeeping of his, I refer the reader thither, for more full satisfying of him about this matter. Only one or two objections, which may arise from the doctrine which I have set down, shall more fitly be answered here.

## **CHAP. 14.**

Of the answering of some objections about the former doctrine, and of the other two virtues which help to a godly life.

As first this, whereas these rules have been said to be able to carry the Christian believer, in a well ordered course of living, some object thus: It falleth out often times, that we have a very good desire to do that, which we know, pleaseth God; but we find no strength to perform. And further, they say; we do not so much marvel that we attain not that which we seek, when the Apostle himself maketh the same complaint, where he saith, to will is present with me, but I find no way to accomplish that which I desire. I will not answer this as the devoutest Jesuits do, namely, that God giveth his grace, and we may receive it if we list, although we have no assurance of his favor by faith: which is a mere mocking of poor people, whiles they are warned to seek that with unsavory and uncomfortable wearying of themselves, which they can never possibly find: But this I say, if this

be oft and earnestly desired of thee (as it was of Paul ) God's grace shall be sufficient for thee.

And further, if thou hast never so fervent a desire to overcome evil, and to do that which thou knowest to be good, and yet hast not thy heart possessed of the favor of God, and taken up therewith, but standest waveringly affected about that matter, thy desire is not that desire which I have spoken of: neither therefore able to help thee in that which thou wouldest; it being no fruit of faith. For this it is, that overcometh all lets in the world, and no other thing, even this faith I mean, whiles by it we are persuaded that Christ Jesus so loveth us, that he is ready to do anything which is expedient for us: because of the great favor that he beareth us, whereby we are made able also, and in whom we can do all things, as shall be expedient for us.

For as nothing can separate it from us, so he thinketh nothing too good, or too precious for us. So that he, into whose heart his love is shed plentifully, is persuaded, that as he hath saved him from the greatest danger of hell; so he will much more save him from the smaller, of being overcome of his corrupt lusts: and that he, who hath bestowed by free grant and sure promise, the greatest benefit upon him, namely, the kingdom of heaven; will not deny him the smaller, that is, grace to live Christianly here on earth. For he that hath given us Christ, by whom we have the former, how shall he not with him give us other things also? And if, not as we would, yet that is best which he giveth.

Now for the other part of the objection, that Paul himself did not find grace to overcome the rebellion of the old man, that is, his corrupt nature: I say, it is true, that fully and perfectly he did not: to the end, that he might always have a mark of his unworthiness, and sin remaining in him, and thereby remember, that it was of only mercy

that he was pardoned, and the grace of God, that kept him from falling away from him. And for both these causes, that he might be abased, and kept humble under so great grace as he had received: in regard whereof, he had (as he confesseth himself) been exalted and lifted up above measure: and last of all, that he might from time to time find sweetness still in the forgiveness of his sins. But although he was not perfect here, as an Angel; yet was he not carried of his lusts into gross iniquity (as some dream, because he cried out and complained, I am carnal, sold under sin: O wretched man that I am!) And it was necessary that he should mislike and be grieved with the smallest rebellion or resistance of goodness, and with some unfitness to his calling which he felt sometimes, and to other good duties: but yet God's grace was sufficient to keep him, that he fell not into that depth that he might have done.

But I have in effect answered this already by another occasion. Now to apply this to ourselves, and not to be gluttoned with it as many are, I say; that we likewise through the same grace in our measure, may look with good cheer to be delivered from the yielding to our wicked lusts, which most dangerously incumber us, as he was from his: we being resolved, that our most loving father (for the tender care he hath over us) is always looking down from heaven, and beholding who is upright hearted towards him (how weak soever) that he may show himself strong towards him, and thereby supply his weakness. And thus the desire to keep a godly course being soundly planted in us, and the same proceeding from faith also, who doubteth but that it may have strength to do such outward duties as are required, though weakly: to endeavor at least (which God will accept) though we do not always prevail over such strong corruptions, as oftentimes for want of such grace do master us. But in thus speaking, I show what God's children may confidently look for, not what everyone obtaineth. And except the sin of incontinency, against the which God

hath provided a lawful remedy, we have both promise from God, and we by the power of our faith, do enjoy such victory over other sins, as whereby we may walk without just reproof amongst men, and keep our peace toward him also: this being added, that when we are craftily deceived by the incessant malice of the devil, (although not without our own sloth, sleepiness and security) we have access, as in time past, and recourse to God by the means of our advocate, and do recover our hope and hold again.

Thus I have showed, how they who have a will and good desire, may look for strength also to perform in some good sort, the duties which seem so difficult and impossible to them, so that they need not be greatly troubled with that objection: howsoever there are many, and those also favorers of Christian religion, who never find nor feel the same. But because many of God's dear servants find it not thus oft times, neither are able to say, that they feel this, but contrarily do complain that their life is full of disquietness, for that they cannot overcome the force of anger, impatience, raging, frowardness, and such like, neither live godly to their contentation, although they desire it: because I say these may be discouraged by this doctrine, I would have them understand, that I have not in the former answer to the last objection set down, what every godly Christian doth or shall feel (as I said before) but what God of his bountiful liberality hath provided, that they may feel and find: and how their estate may be bettered, and their spiritual liberty enlarged.

Besides, many good people do not know this, in a long time what God hath bequeathed them: nay, many of them never know one of the many sweet liberties and privileges of God's children; but only receive so much light from the father of light (and therefore are rightly called the children of light) as whereby they see the way to his kingdom: and according to the knowledge they have of his will,



thereafter they declare and show it forth in their lives; but nothing as they might, and as some others do.

Now to proceed to the other virtues which further our practice of a godly life: such as receive and desire to attain to the grace which I have spoken of, that is, to be more sound and better settled in an holy course, they are and must be glad with all their heart to be diligent and painful in this work of the Lord, and to abide constant therein, that they may by these two virtues adjoined, nourish all good desires, and holy endeavors, after they be once planted in them: and hold out the contrary, whilst they be not yet greatly troubled with them: and set on work their knowledge in such practice, as it may well be seen whose servants they are.

This diligence and constancy, in whatsoever they be used, they bring great things to pass, whether it be in any trade, or in the searching out of things obscure and hard to be found out, when only the light of reason is followed: and who doubteth then, but that in holy duties, wherein men are guided by the spirit of God, most excellent effects are brought forth of them? Neither is any duty indeed well performed without them: for which cause S. Peter speaking of the godly life, teacheth that all diligence must be added thereto: Give all diligence (saith he) to join with your faith virtue, as if he should say, that all is lost without it: and Jeremiah saith, that he is cursed, that doth God's business negligently: And of constancy, what saith S. James? He that looketh in the perfect law of liberty, and abideth therein, if he be not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, shall be blessed in his deed, that is, in so behaving himself.

Therefore, by the first of these two, namely, diligence, let them be ready to take all occasions and opportunities to the doing of some good, and to shun idleness and unprofitableness, that so they may

bring forth much fruit redeeming the time wisely, while they may: and that with a thousand times more gain then others do: and not as slothful, and unthrifty persons, pass it over idly and unprofitably, for the pleasing and satisfying of their foolish appetite, for the present time.

By the second, namely, constancy, and continuance, let them not only keep their hearts and lives in the same good estate, which by diligence they have already nourished in themselves, but also wax more fruitful, and their hearts more enlarged: and so daily become followers of every good work, until their latter years be better than the former, and until they have finished their course with joy. And being once acquainted with the gain that these bring with them, they shall do as the merchants (who having their minds set upon their advantage, suffer not themselves to range after pleasures, but busily follow their trade which bringeth in commodity) so that whatsoever part of the Christian life they are occupied about (holding these for their companions) they may count it the most happy time, which is so bestowed. For in so doing, they wean their hearts and minds from much draff and worldly lusts, which would, if they might be lodged there, much annoy them: and thereby they are much more readily disposed unto duty, then such as will not embrace them: who being contented with any uncertain and deceivable persuasion of God's favor, and refusing to be holden within such narrow straits and compass of this holy and Christian counsel, that is, of going forward by diligence and constancy in their course, break out oftentimes to their trouble, danger, and discredit; when the other are quiet and merry. And because they account it bondage to be held in after that manner, therefore they find that they pay dear for their liberties, when they be after constrained to repent the seeking of them, and yet cannot easily recover their inward peace which they lost for them, nor shake them off again, when yet most gladly they would.

And for want of these two, and through the contrary, sloth and inconstant unsettledness, in that they do not settle themselves to one good thing or other, even the most of the godly do not find that sweet fruit in their life, which is to be found, namely, of safety under God's protection from time to time: but by improvidence, and weariness of well doing, they do by little and little plunge themselves into some deep unsettledness, out of the which, it is hard to arise again. Therefore Solomon in two words hath fitly expressed them both, saying: Let the fear of the Lord be in thy heart continually: which is as much, as a diligent care to please him with constancy therein.

Thus as I have said, to these former rules and virtues which guide us to live godly, these two are commanded, diligence and constancy. By the one, that we be readily prepared, as we ought to practice good, and so resist evil: whereas slackness and no care, or too little, is condemned. By the other, that thereby we may continually go forward in doing good, and fleeing evil: wherein all staying, fickleness, or going backward, is very dangerous. Hereto belongeth that to the Corinthians, when he hath said: Awake to live righteously, and sin not, he addeth, Be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: knowing that your labor is not in vain. And after; Watch, stand fast in the faith, quite yourselves like men, and be strong. And this is necessary above all things, that so we may become that simplicity which is meet for them who are in Christ.

Now that this our diligence and care in all good duties ought to be for continuance, and even while life lasteth; let us know, that the Lord commandeth it to all his children: according to that which is written, He that abideth to the end, he shall be saved. And in another place, If ye continue in my word, and it abide in you, then are ye my disciples indeed: and, Ask what ye will, and it shall be done to you. And yet this might be spoken to small purpose, if the Lord had not promised

as much to his faithful servants; that they shall have grace to persevere given them from above: as he saith by the Apostle: He that hath begun this good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Also to the Thessalonians: Faithful is he that hath called you, which will also do it. If it be demanded, how he will enable them, seeing there are many fears in their life of final falling away: the same Apostle answereth this, in the Epistle to the Colossians, saying: To the end ye may walk worthy of the Lord, (and please him in all things) and be fruitful in all good works, and increase in the acknowledging of God, ye must be strengthened with all might through his glorious power unto all patience and long sufferance with joyfulness. And S. John speaketh to the same purpose, thus: Greater is he that is in you (that is, the spirit of God) then he that is in the world, that is, the devil. The fruit of such a course is both a happy end here (as it is written: Mark the end of the upright and just, for the end of that man is peace) and happiness forever after. As we read where Paul saith: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and kept the faith: from henceforth is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all that love his appearing. But I have been long in the former points, and by occasion have showed throughout the whole discourse of the godly life, that it must be continued to the end: I cease now to say anymore.

Thus having set down these virtues which must guide us to practice the godly life throughout our whole course, it may easily be seen how every man who is come thus far, may prove himself a repentant person, and be apt and fit to bring forth the fruits of amendment in his particular actions, and how his whole conversation may be such as may beseem a man of God, so far as human frailty will suffer: wherein, because we follow Christ Jesus himself, we must know, that all our duties must be practiced in humility and meekness: for so he

saith, in submitting yourselves to my doctrine, and in leading the godly life, learn of me to be humble and meek.

As if he should say, if ye be haughty and high minded, so as ye despise the simplicity of my doctrine, and think it too base a thing for you to be subject to; or froward and intractable, that in some points ye will hold back, though in some other ye be obedient, ye can never live godly, as God requireth of you. These therefore must have no place in Christians, either Ministers, or private persons, but the contrary virtues, as I have said: which are oft times in the Scriptures set down together, as well as in this place: that we may know how needful it is, that they should always go together; and that although there be many goodly gifts in a man, yet if he hath not these, they shall lose their credit, and beauty amongst those which behold them, and withhold their commodity from him who wanteth them.

And these two are not particular virtues which sometime only may have use, but such fruits of the spirit as necessarily are required in all actions: so that at no time, humbleness of mind, and meekness of spirit may be wanting. All these virtues (I confess) are common, as well to the forsaking of evil, as to the doing of good: and so understand it, though it be put out of place. But I set them down here, seeing the former part of this treatise was so large. And that which I have said of this matter, I wish to be well observed, that the life of the believer is a continual proceeding in the departing from evil, and endeavoring after duties, in such manner as hath been said: and a settled course in repentance, and a constant walking with God; and not an idle, or uncertain stumbling upon some good actions (whiles a great part of his life is neglected, and not looked after) he must not be sometime at command, and ready to offer his service to God in some good mood, and after take his own liberty to do what he listeth.

The Lord's service is not like the disordered service of many unreformed gentlemen, where, besides the attending at table and on horseback, the attenders may run where they will: but it is like to a well governed family, where all are appointed their office and place, in one thing after another to be well occupied, and kept from idleness; and yet not discharged thereby, to do what they will after. So our Savior teacheth it should be with his servants, as with a servant in a family: who when he hath wrought in the field, is not by and by discharged of other duties, but then doth business at home: so they, when they have been fruitful, and have purposed to do all that is required of them, have done but their duty.

So that the end of one work is the beginning of another: and yet all without toile and tediousness. For so hath God provided, that his servants may be merry at their work, yea whatsoever they shall put their hand unto; and the more duties they do, redeeming the time from idleness, and unprofitableness, the merrier. There is much work in the Lord's family, as there are many places to serve in: And the slothful and idle ones, howsoever they can have place sometime in earthly government, yet are they expelled from thence. And this is that which Saint Peter warneth us, that we be neither idle, nor barren, which we shall avoid, if we be filled and furnished with the train of heavenly virtues: as knowledge, faith, love, patience, godliness. And herein is our heavenly father glorified, if we bring forth much fruit.

To this end we must know that Christianity is fitly compared to a trade, wherein men go from one work to another: and a Christian hath many sins to weed out, and to labor against, and therefore not carelessly to mar all his work in an hour, that he hath well followed sundry days: as he that loseth all that he hath by a cast at dice. He hath also many duties to look unto, towards God, his neighbor, and

himself: wherein it shall be found requisite for him to be careful, after the doing of one, to go to another: and not to admit anything against the peace of his conscience, no not in his recreations, nor in his weightiest worldly dealings, feasting, company, &c. but to see the unity of the spirit kept in the bond of peace. And as the Physicians do well direct, that for the preserving of bodily health, it is good to rise from our meat with an appetite, and not to overcharge the stomach: so it is none of the meanest rules for maintaining our souls health, to keep always an appetite to some new duty, when we have performed the old, and not to be so wearied in the doing of one, that we be utterly unfit to go about another.

This one thing being thus from time to time carefully regarded, shall make all the rest well and rightly used, and the whole life thereby kept in frame and good order. For thus to be settled in our Christian course, that with full resolution we be willingly weaned from our evil lusts and corruptions, or readily disposed to one good duty or other, and not weary, but it be forthwith disliked (as we need not, serving so bountiful a master as we do, who have God the commander of our work, and a promiser of blessing unto it:) Thus (I say) to be settled, who can say, but that it is a singular testimony of their spiritual welfare to all that practice it, and a furtherance of a godly and well-ordered life.

## **CHAP. 15.**

Of some particular duties pertaining to God directly in the first, second, third, and fourth commandments.

Now the rules and virtues having been set down, which help to the practice of a godly life, I will show in what points this life consisteth, and set down a sum of it: but more briefly I will do it, because it may

in some sort be gathered by the description of the ungodly life: and also for that no man can set down all the particulars of it, but they must be learned and known of the true Christian, out of good catechisms, and by daily and attentive hearing of his ordinary teacher, who is able to instruct him herein, and by a diligent search into his own life by the commandments.

But yet to help the weak, that they may see how to draw out of this whole treasury, and rich hoard of the commandments, for the better ordering of their ways, through their whole course, that which shall be necessary (seeing they shall not always have other helps at hand) I will set down some of the chiefest, throughout them all. And first those duties which directly pertain to God (following the order, which I did in setting down the sins before:) According to that which is in the Apostle, where he saith, that the knowledge of salvation teacheth us to live holily, &c. and to give unto God, the things which are God's.

And first of all, to begin with the duties of the first commandment (the life and light of all the rest) it is first required, that we seek and desire to know God, though not perfectly (which we cannot do) yet as he may be known of us, as his word doth reveal him to us: that in his nature and properties, he is spiritual, infinite, pure, holy, righteous, only wise, constant, omnipotent, only good, one in essence, three in person: and in his works; as his constant decree, and execution of the same in creation and government: in all most admirable; as we see in the earth with his furniture, wherewith we are best acquainted: although that be but as his footstool, to conceive of his glory in heaven, which is as his throne. But alas, this knowledge of God is weak even in many a true Christian believer: but that everyone is then fit to learn it aright, when he is once a Christian. Furthermore, we must acknowledge, that is, allow, and in heart, yield and consent



unto the truth of those things which we know of him: that then we may safely and boldly believe in him, and cleave to him. For this knowledge of his majesty causeth all his faithful ones to be truly knit unto him, and to fix their whole delight in him: so that, they say with the Psalmist: Whom have I in heaven (O Lord) but thee? And who is he on earth, whom I desire in comparison of thee? So that none is, as the Lord, unto them.

We thus cleaving unto him, and knowing ourselves to be safe under his wings, grow to put our confidence in him, that he will help us in all our necessities and tribulations. And from this confidence, arise many other Christian duties: as to hope and look for that help which in confidence we assure ourselves of, from the Lord: yea although means be wanting, yet we give glory unto God; as the three children which being cast into the burning furnace, committed themselves unto his protection, although at that time they saw no likelihood of help at all. Again, through this confidence, we are not afraid, no not in greatest dangers, but are patient, and without murmuring hold our peace, because we know, the Lord hath done it: and that which is more, we count it good for us that we are afflicted, and receiving all as from a father, do rejoice soundly, and heartily in them, through hope at least. And through the same confidence, we rejoice in every condition of life unspeakably: yet no otherwise, then as we be afraid to do anything, which may displease God, as I shall say afterwards: because we know, that although this is wearisomeness to the wicked; yet there is cause continually offered us, to be careful, that in all things we may be approved of him.

And seeing we behold, how all good things do flow to us from God, therefore we offer unto his majesty, this other duty, in all things to be thankful: namely, with a kind heart testifying, that all our well-fare cometh from him: and so do we in our wants, and necessities lift up

our hearts unto him by prayer, for the obtaining of the things which we want. And when he thus bountifully imparteth to us all good things, which yet are but the smaller fruits of his favor, (and yet, if they were not enough, he would send us more and greater) who doubteth that with all our hearts and strength, we are affected to love him, more than wife, children, house, land, or whatsoever is of greatest price in the world beside? Yea that in comparison thereof, the best things of price, are reckoned but as dung? And in token of this true love to God, we give ourselves to solace our souls in him, as David, even when he was in danger of his life, did comfort himself in his God, 1. Sam. 30:6, because it is so sweet and beautiful, to think and meditate oft times upon the infinite good things that do flow from him unto us: but most of all desiring to enjoy his presence in heaven, which shall be with fullness of pleasures for evermore.

And further, because all which know God, and put their confidence in him, and love him, are overwhelmed as it were, with the infiniteness and excellency of his glorious majesty, therefore they are drawn to behave themselves more reverently, and uprightly before him, then before the greatest potentates in the world: and therefore are prepared to walk before him continually in an holy and childlike fear, desiring that he will teach them by his wisdom, direct them by his providence, and bless their whole course, so as they may comfortably feel the same, through their life.

Now besides these duties of holiness which we owe directly to the person of God, merely spiritual and inward, there are other whereby we worship him outwardly, which also are parts of this holiness towards God: it followeth therefore, now to mention some of the chief points of this external worship of God both public and private; and in what manner it should be used: but before it is to be known, that he will allow of no other means of worshipping him outwardly,

then he hath appointed and prescribed himself in his word. And therefore the office of the ministry itself (by which God is truly worshipped publicly) must not be an office to sacrifice and say mass for the sins of the quick and dead (which God's word plainly condemneth) neither must it be any other than that which God acknowledgeth for his: that is, a publishing and preaching of the Gospel, and glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ to penitent sinners and believers, and a ministering of the sacraments, which he hath ordained for the comfort of them.

Such ministers they must be at the least, which serve him, whatsoever graces they have beside, if they would that God should acknowledge and take them for his: and after such outward manner must they worship him in all dutifulness of heart, both magistrate and private person, who will worship him aright: And amongst the public services of God, these are some and the principal, with prayers by voice expressed, thanksgiving, confessions of sins, and singing of Psalms, the fruit of the lips; with the censures of admonition, and excommunication, as cause doth require: which I knit together for brevity sake, seeing I have only taken in hand, to set down shortly, what the partes of God's outward worship are, (not largely to handle them) that all may see the better hereafter, when I shall come to it, how the daily direction for a Christians life, may fitly be drawn out, and made up of the whole body of godliness laid together in the commandments.

To these may be added, public fasts, when the people of God by some especial calamities either hanging over them, or already upon them, or for grievous transgressions against God, do abase and humble themselves more earnestly and fervently, to entreat God against them: Also public thanksgiving for some rare benefit or deliverance sent upon the Church: In all which public actions the Lord requireth

straitly, besides, that we should love, desire and procure them by all means that we can; so, that we show all reverence in the use of them: as by bowing our necks in making our prayers, lifting up of our hands, or eyes, as occasion is offered; so casting down of lifting up the countenance with cheerfulness, as the matter heard requireth.

Another part of God's worship is, when the most of these now spoken of, are used privately of us: Also the talking and conferring of the word of God, in mutual instructing, admonishing, exhorting, comforting, or any way else which is fit for edifying; as singing of Psalms, and thanksgivings in Christian families, both jointly and severally, according to their particular occasions and opportunities, and namely at meat and at rest. And to conclude, we must all both magistrate, minister, and people carefully avoid, and watch against all occasions of superstition and idolatry: and be zealous against the same, to the rooting out and abolishing of them, as much as in us lieth: and carefully retain, and hold our company and familiarity with the true professors and worshippers of God; and continue daily our frequenting of the places of public assemblies of God's people, and not break off our fellowship, as the manner of some is: Neither give or take occasion, one or other of us, in our several estates or places, of hindering or cooling our holy and comfortable proceedings in the Lord's pure worship and service.

But seeing the Scripture teacheth, that he is not a Jew, which is so only in the eyes of men; neither is the drawing near with the lips and body only, spiritual: therefore the manner of doing these duties in God's outward worship, is also to be learned (as in a word I have touched before) that as in themselves they are good and godly; so they may, as they come from the believers, be also sweet and savory in the Lord's nostrils, namely, that (as they proceed from faith) so

they may be seasoned with holy affections, as oft as they are offered to him.

So that we are to know this, that when we shall set upon any part of his worship, which now hath been spoken of, it is highly displeasing to him, to go about the same lightly, rashly, falsely, hypocritically, and unprofitably: for that were abominable to him, as a dead sacrifice. But contrarily, we must use them with all high reverence, being prepared rightly before: well affected in the using of them: and aiming at the most profitable end which he hath appointed, that so we may be approved and allowed of him.

Now if I should particularly declare how and after what manner, every part of the outward worshipping of God should be used, as I have showed in general; I should tarry too long in this matter: but in some few of the principallest particulars I will show it, that thereby may be seen what is required in the rest. In the preaching of the word, being the way to enlighten us, first with faith; and after, to settle and establish us in the truth; we should come prepared to the hearing of it after this manner: laying aside all filthiness of heart and hands, which might hold out wisdom, we being ready and desirous to receive it with a hungry soul: and therefore not rashly, and little regarding what we go about; neither coming with a captious and malicious purpose to hear. In the action itself, we should be thus affected: with our whole soul to mark and weigh the matter, that so we may be touched with it accordingly: that is to say, with hearing our faults, we should be pricked, and relent: with hearing promises, believe, and receive comfort by them: by doctrine of duty, to be fully resolved to practice it: and therefore not to have our heads full of other matters, running upon our profits and pleasures, or in hypocrisy: and though we take some delight in that which we hear, yet not to be contented to rest therein, without the feeling of the true

work of it in us. After we have heard, we should give all diligence to muse and confer of the things which we have heard, examining them by the Scriptures, with the good men of Thessalonica: and finding agreement betwixt both, with more boldness to set ourselves forward in every good way by the help thereof.

This is the right manner of hearing the word of God preached, which the Lord hath taught his people to endeavor after: as whereby he warranteth them singular fruit and blessing. And although this be but the use and help of one part of God's worship; yet if we were alike directed in all the rest, how greatly (think we) might a Christian be holpen and enabled to the true worshipping of God by the same? Which now being not known of many, neither reverently practiced, is a thing most unsavory and irksome unto them. Not much unlike to this, is the true manner of the private exercise of God's word in reading and conferring upon it: that with high reverence in hope to get profit thereby, and praying earnestly for the same, we should go about it: whiles we are at it, withdraw our minds from all other things; and after, apply it profitably and readily to use it.

To the Lord's Supper, if we desire to find it (as it is in itself a heavenly banquet) we should see that we come in our wedding garment, meet guests for such a table, appareled with the robe of faith and repentance; without which, the Lord of the feast will neither look upon us, nor welcome us, but expel us rather. In the time of our receiving, we should be heavenly minded, much comforted and made glad, as feeding upon such dainties, whereby our souls and bodies shall live happily forever. And afterwards, to be thankful to the giver of so great good things; and a long time after, to retain the strength we received by them, to the end we may feel ourselves ready to testify the same by all dutiful obedience for the time to come.

Of prayer also, which shall be more fully spoken of in another place, there is an holy and reverent use to be made (though many are little acquainted with it) namely, that we should seriously weigh God's almighty power, and how fatherly he is affected to us, which two things should be our pillars to lean unto, so that we may be the better prepared thereto: that whilst we are in pouring out of our prayers unto him, we may through this confidence, feel ourselves effectually moved to lift up pure heart and hands unto him with cheerfulness: and after blessing received, be made more readily disposed to pray often with thanksgiving. And these are some of the chief duties to God, and in such manner, as is before mentioned, they are to be performed unto him.

Now further we are commanded not only in his worship, but also in our whole life, everywhere to seek his glory: for so he hath willed us, that we should frame the whole course thereof holily throughout the six days, that so we may glorify him therein. And who doth not see, that this should be so? Namely, that in our life and behavior we should as well walk worthy the Lord in all things, as in the worshipping of him both publicly and privately, as we have been directed before? That so there may be in these two commandments, fully laid forth unto us, a sum of all outward duties, which in the six days we ought to perform unto him: and in the due practice of both, we may show forth the fruit of that knowledge, acknowledgement, faith, fear, and love of God, and all other inward graces, which we have been taught to honor him with, in our hearts, by the first commandment. Therefore, as I said, the duties enjoined us in this third, do most fitly go with those of the two former: that not only in the time of preaching and prayer, and such like exercises of religion, but also in our common and usual speech and actions, we declare what a worthy and reverend estimation we have of the Lord: as by speaking all good of his name, word, and works: and in our lawful

callings, by ordering and behaving ourselves wisely and graciously: that all which live with us, may see that our religion is joined with the power of godliness: And that this be done of us in all estates and conditions of our life, both in prosperity and adversity: and that as many as we can prevail with (our own family and charge especially) we labor to persuade unto the same: yea and if we at any time fall by infirmity, yet that we acknowledge the same, as cause requireth, and so return to the Lord again; as Joshua exhorted Achan to do; To be short. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do else, all is to be done to the glory of his name. And in mentioning the commonest of our actions, as our eating and drinking, he excepteth none; to the end, that we may carry ourselves in a stayed and well-ordered course continually, whilst we show that in the smallest matters, and in our actions, which seem least weighty, we be afraid to offend: as in our common talk, that it be savory, and for edifying. And seeing we use the name of God very oft both in our common speech, and particularly in an oath; his mercy, justice, wisdom, and power are to move our hearts, as oft as we have cause to speak of him, with all high reverence to use the same. But more especially, when just occasion of swearing by him is offered, we should diligently consider the person of the Lord, how he is a revenger of all such as take his holy name in vain: and the matter itself, about which we swear, that we do it in truth, in righteousness and judgment. In truth, so that whatsoever be affirmed or denied, may truly and for certainty be affirmed or denied: and whatsoever be vowed or promised, be promised and vowed without fraud, and simply. In righteousness, that there be a just cause of our swearing, and that which is agreeable to the will of God. In judgment, that it be done advisedly, not lightly, or rashly, but that we may take comfort in performing that great duty aright, namely, that we have made known the truth, which being made known by us, hath cut off some great doubt and controversy.



And so should we in the beholding of the works of God (as the firmament; with the Sun, Moon, and Stars: the earth with her furniture, as the corn, grass, trees, and her large prospect) take sweet feeling of God's Majesty, and beauty which shineth in them, rejoicing with reverence, that he hath given us this clear glass to behold his face in (although this we must know that in all these inferior creatures and works of his, we see not any part of his throne, but only some part of his footstool:) which should move us therefore, in all our actions to beware of hypocrisy.

Seeing therefore we have daily use of these, I thought good to make mention of them (yet in as few words as I could so large matters) how we ought to use them: let the residue be learned by ordinary hearing those, who being furnished with gifts fit for this purpose, are appointed of God to make his people sound and skillful in them: that they may show to the world, that the honoring of God, as it is set forth in his word, is another manner of life then the world is acquainted with, and so bringeth another manner of honor to him, and comfort to men, then the embracers and lovers of the world can be partakers of.

Thus I have spoken of the behavior which inwardly and outwardly, both in God's holy worship and in our whole conversation towards God directly, we are to show in the whole six days throughout our life.

That which followeth next, is that part of holiness and obedience which is to be given to the Lord, one day in seven: Nothing differing from all the three former, saving that, all our own works though lawful on other days, are on this day, as much as is possible, to be laid aside, that is, except in case of necessity: and the whole day to be bestowed in his worship, and service, and in things directly tending

to the same. So that, by virtue of this part of God's honor, we are not restrained from our sin only (which we are forbidden every day) but from common labor also, which is an hindrance from the consecrating of the whole day unto God: And therefore lawful works being forbidden, we may assure our selves, that much more he condemneth the intermixing of vain and foolish Interludes and Plays, with such like misspending of the time: and the filling of men's mouths as well as their heads with worldly cares and dealings, to too common on that day, although not tolerable on other.

But because the Lord knoweth how prone, and ready we are to weariness of well doing, therefore he hath not only appointed some part of this day to be passed in public, and other some in private exercises of godliness; but also he hath given us great variety of both sorts, that so the whole time may be bestowed without tediousness and toil; even from our preparing ourselves to the sanctifying of it, at our uprising, unto the last duties at our lying down: which merciful and wise regard of his, over us, if it cannot move us to give ourselves to practice this part of holiness (whatsoever our excuses be) we plainly show, that our minds are earthly and carnal, and that we do but favor ourselves in worldliness, or profaneness, idleness and ease, when we reason against it, as being too precise.

The public duties, are the reverent assemblies of Christians in the preaching of the word, in prayer, and administering of the sacraments, on that day especially to be used, howsoever on other days by occasions oft intermitted: All of them are most blessed helps for the establishing of us in a holy life. Of the private, some do particularly concern ourselves alone: some are as well for the benefit of others, as for our own comfort: for ourselves, we are to meditate on the works of God, upon his wonderful works, which he hath done for the sons of men; that so we may feel his goodness many ways;

and from the sweetness which we perceive in the creatures, we may be lifted up, to behold the beauty and favor of the creator.

We are also to think of the doctrine which we have heard, that it may the easilier be imprinted in us. And on this day we are more freely to consider of our estate: how we proceed in the religious keeping of our covenant with God: and how we grow in the assurance of God's mercy, and our redemption: or whether we go not back, or stand not at a stay. And every way as our need shall most require, we are to use our examining's of ourselves, meditations and thanksgivings on this day, not only for our present comfort; but for our more fruitful walking all the week following. Conference of good things, tendeth as well to the edifying of others, as our selves. Beside the which there are other duties to be done to them, as to do the works of mercy to them, as well in visiting them in their sickness, relieving their necessities, breaking off their disagreements, and reconciling them who were at variance, as in spiritual comforting's of them, as God doth enable us. And these all laid together are as a continual direction for the holy use of the Sabbath to us (even as the daily direction which I shall add afterwards, is to serve a Christian daily as long as he shall live:) for the profitable and heavenly spending of the Sabbath is the market of the soul, in the which, he, who is wise, will provide and store himself for all the other days of the week, wherein it is like he shall have little help, but much discouragement, as in the world may be seen. And this holy passing of the Sabbath must be religiously regarded of all the Christian family, as the charge given to the governor thereof doth show: and of the stranger also who shall come under his roof. This is the sum of the holiness, which we are to show towards God: he that desireth to hear more fully of this matter, which I may not handle at large, let him read such treatises as are written of that argument.

## CHAP. 16.

Of certain duties to men, in the fifth, sixth, and seventh commandment, the obeying whereof is a part of the godly life.

Now followeth another branch of the second part of this godly or Christian life, requiring of us righteous dealing towards all men: Where by the way, this is to be carefully regarded, that seeing there is an apparent distinction and difference betwixt those forenamed duties of holiness to God, and these of righteousness to men which shall follow, and yet both alike commanded; therefore that no man disjoin in his practice, or separate the one from the other, seeing the Lord hath set them down jointly together. I speak this, because there are many, who delighting in hearing the word preached, and prayer, and reading (which are duties directly appertaining to God; yet are very negligent in performing that which is due to men; as in doing works of charity to the poor, living peaceably and comfortably in marriage, or in shunning hasty judging of their brethren, and in being dutiful to superiors, as magistrates, parents, masters, (when yet they command in the Lord:) and so, contrarily some shall be found doing many things commendable to men, and no religion in them towards God. Which thing, if it be of ignorance, is a shameful blemish in them, who are guilty of it, seeing they have had so long a time granted them of God, in which they might have learned better: but if after it be known, it remain still; it plainly testifieth that there is in them a willful disobedience against God, and that the best of their works are in vain.

And before I enter into the particular duties of righteousness to all sorts of men, it is here as in the fittest place to be taught, which cannot be afterward so conveniently added: That we have this mind in us, that we bear love towards all men even our greatest enemies;

from which ground and root of love, we may be ready to perform all the duties, which we shall know to belong to them from us, required particularly in the commandments following: And secondly, that we join with it another general virtue, which is brotherly kindness to Christians, which are brethren with us, which is an holy and especial love of one faithful brother towards another. And these two, are those which Saint Peter speaketh of, when he saith, join with brotherly kindness, love: where this virtue is, they have learned to give every one of the faithful their brethren (according to the knowledge wherewith God hath enlightened them) the several duties required in the second table. A rare and singular gift of God; which if we could see the practice of it, what light of good example it giveth, and what profit, it would inflame us wonderfully to the practicing of it.

Now follow the several parts of righteousness to men, as they are distinctly set down in the six commandments following, to be performed of Christians, and which help to make up the second part of a godly life. In all which, although there are many more particular duties to be mentioned then were in the former part (because we have so many dealings, and that with infinite persons) yet I will set them down with the like brevity as near as I can, that I have done the duties of holiness to God, leaving the reader to learn the other (as I have said before) by other ordinary means.

And first the duty which men owe as they are inferiors to others, and the superiors to them again, come here to be considered, both generally, and one particularly towards another. Where this is required of all inferiors, that they so carry themselves in their whole course to them, which by God's appointment are above them, or excel them, that they may show in their whole course that they honor them: for so the will of God is, not to require any one especial action

or duty of them, but that their whole conversation be such towards them, that the person which they take upon them, and the place wherein they are, may have more credit and estimation among men, and be upholden and maintained in such sort, that they may weigh down all wicked practices of men against the same.

The duties in general, which belong to all inferiors, do arise from this one, as from a fountain, that is to say, subjection: which is a voluntary acknowledging, that they are set under those, which are their superiors by God's ordinance and appointment. The which when men are persuaded of, they will readily go under any duty that appertaineth to them. And from hence issueth inward reverence towards them, as to think highly of them for that person, which God hath put upon them: and therefore also to give them that outward reverence, which is due to them: as to rise and bow to them, to give them the higher place, liberty to speak before them, and to give them reverent titles; and submitting themselves to them every way, as it is meet: which if in love it be not regarded, and the benefit, which God hath appointed thereby to come to their inferiors, considered, that so there may be a preserving of the dignity and worthiness of such persons and places amongst men, all confusion and barbarousness must needs ensue and follow.

And for this cause the superiors again for their parts must see, that they carry themselves towards them as brethren, in all courtesy, saving their authority: and further also that they go before them, both in all innocence, and example of good life. And because there are some superiors to us by civil authority, as princes and other magistrates; and some ecclesiastical, as Church officers; some by nature as parents; some by age, as the gray headed, and some by gifts, as of knowledge, experience, and other graces: therefore both their inferiors to them, and they to their inferiors (besides the former

duties in general set down) have somewhat severally to look to, one towards the other. To such as have authority over them, inferiors must submit themselves, in bearing their rebukes, and receiving their corrections willingly, and without resistance, by not answering again, by stomach or countenance; yea though they suffer wrongfully: which commandment Saint Peter giving to servants toward their masters, who are not superiors of the highest power, or of greatest authority, doth much more bind other inferiors to be subject thereto.

And further besides this, such inferiors are charged by God to be obedient only to their lawful commandments; so that God be not thereby deprived of his due: for this cause subjects pay tribute to their Princes: and hold both their goods and lives so, as they be at their commandment. And servants, which will testify and show, that they count their masters worthy all honor, do frame themselves to serve them with faithfulness and diligence, not with eye service: by the one, seeking their profit and good trustily; by the other, doing their duties with care and painfulness, even as to the Lord himself.

So all high Magistrates, both Kings, and such as are in authority under them, owe this particularly to the people, over whom they are, to regard, that the Gospel of Christ Jesus be published freely and purely by the Ministers thereof, thorough their whole dominion, to bring the people to God: and the same dominion to be well governed, by the right executing of wholesome and good laws, that the people may live an honest and quiet life under them. So also Masters for recompense to their servants, are charged by the Lord, to show themselves, as well good and bountiful towards them in recompensing their labor and travail to the full, as besides it, to do that which is just and equal unto them, the which they for their parts do owe to them again: which is to provide that they may be taught in

the congregation, and at home: as also of themselves, to see that no necessities, in meat, drink, work, and honest intermission in due time be wanting; neither that they with whom they have so covenanted, be kept ignorant, and unexpert in their trade.

Another kind of superiors, are kindred by nature, and parents in the flesh, to whom their inferiors and children for the singular benefits which they receive from them (except they degenerate far from their duties) do acknowledge much to be due to them again. Among which, this is not the least, that they show themselves forward in the embracing of holy instruction according to the ripeness of their years. That their reverence and obedience continue (of children I speak) even unto their end, although with more liberty, when they shall be of more ripe years, their parents themselves consenting thereto. Also that they make no marriages without their consent. That in token of thankfulness, they be ready to help their necessities. And that they be careful also to do their duties, even to those which shall succeed their parents, by way of second marriage: For their parents are bound to teach them from their youth, as was said of servants; to keep them from idleness, to train them up in some lawful and honest trade, to govern them wisely, and kindly, to provide for their necessity of marriage, and to minister things needful for this life, as they shall be able, and as they may do it religiously and lawfully.

Of those superiors which excel their inferiors in gifts, the Minister of God is chief: who is furnished with knowledge and grace to convert many to God, and to perfect them, as God's instrument unto the day of Christ's coming. And so particularly, to lift up the faint-hearted by comfort, to strengthen the weak, to direct him that wandreth uncertainly for want of knowledge, and to wait with patience; and by becoming all to all, that he may gain some to God. Therefore the



Lord hath given him a great honor with them whom he prevaieth with, not to be counted their teacher only, but their father: they who know their duties, for this heavenly communion, which they enjoy with God himself, and with Jesus Christ, by his ministry, do with gladness make him partakers of all good things for this life, and have them in singular love for their works sake. And this they do, besides the subjection, reverence, and obedience (which they have in common with all inferiors) who are willing to be taught, and rejoice to be counted obedient children in the faith.

Among these which I count superiors in gifts of the mind, they are to be reckoned, who are strong Christians, and whom God hath endued with a liberal portion of heavenly grace, wisdom, experience, &c. more than other of their brethren, and who know their liberty which they have by Christ in things indifferent, and abuse it not. Towards these, the weaker sort must know, that it is their duty, not to judge them who use their liberty, which they have by Christ, neither to count them as profane men for doing that, which they themselves dare not do; but to think them such, as God will confirm unto the end: and to consider that they themselves had more need to be settled in the knowledge of the truth, then to take upon them to censure those which are wiser then themselves. The duty of the strong is to bear their infirmities, neither to please themselves in the things which they do, but to build up the weak, and to use their liberty aright, serving Christ therein, and seeking the good and benefit of their neighbor: which is done, when for his sake they abstain (when need is) even from things lawful: and then it is necessary, when their weak brother by their example is led to do that which he hath no warrant of, and therefore his conscience is defiled and wounded thereby, and so he waxeth the more backward in the service of God.

But besides these gifts in the stronger sort, such as God hath beautified with any gifts, which others do want, ought to be had in honor and account for the same, and not saucily and proudly to be contemned: for by such, God helpeth forward the welfare of those who do want the same. And namely, the ancient in years and gray-headed are of the younger sort to be esteemed, and had in reverence: as Elihu hath given example in the book of Job; who being in the company of sage and grave men, himself but young, did keep silence a long space: and when he spake, he said, he did so reverence their age, that he was afraid to speak.

And if we can frame ourselves to give these duties to our betters and inferiors, it shall be the easier to regard the dignity and worthiness of those, which are our equals, which in that one sentence of the Apostle is taught us: that when the case so standeth, that we might seem as worthy persons as others, and not anything inferior to them in the judgment of men; yet let us give over our right unto them (if it be any) and in giving honor to them, go before them. And when we have had experience of careful practice in giving this due to our neighbor, we shall both perceive our want, and be ashamed to see how manifoldly we sometime failed herein (which without faithful examining will never appear, by means of our secret self-love) and what benefit we have of Christ's righteousness in this one commandment, to cover our so great unrighteousness against it, and thereby set ourselves more earnestly to grow sound in the duties of it. This point of humility is for good cause required of us towards our neighbor, that we may the more readily yield to other duties which follow.

And this of the duties which we owe to the person of our neighbor: to the which, if we add this, that we be careful to maintain our own reverence and credit among men, by a course beseeming our holy

profession, we shall do well. Now we are to see what God enjoineth us towards their life. To name the duties only, and barely to mention them, doth little good to the most that shall read them, either for understanding or practicing of them: and to stand long I may not, the least that can be said of the particular duties in every commandment (though brevity be studied for) is more then I meant to be occupied about: the wise reader must have consideration thereof. The duties to their lives are many: and those both to the bodily life, and the spiritual. From whence we must fetch for our daily practice, all that we are bound to perform, about this part of duty. And to the preserving of bodily life, health and welfare in our neighbor, as much as lieth in us, it is required at our hands: first, that he sustain no hurt by us, or any of ours, as far as we can hinder it, in stripe, wound, bitter taunt, or hard handling any other way, either he or his, whereby his life might be made unpleasant, while he liveth harmless amongst us: nay though he should overshoot himself towards us, and provoke us; yet God will have us armed against such offenses, by that mildness of spirit, which changeth our boisterous nature into sweet amiableness (verifying that which is written by the Prophet, the lamb and the lion shall feed together, Isaiah. 11:6.) whereby we are made able, and fit to live even with bad persons: Which mildness teacheth us, to bear much and suffer far, rather then to be angry in our own cause; which how weighty soever it seemeth to us, is no better than folly and madness: therefore not to desire revenge at their hands, but to wish still their good.

And for our own parts, wisely and carefully, both in words and in deeds to avoid, and cut off all occasions of discord; yea though it be with the forgoing of some part of our right, as Abraham did to Lot; and to procure peace, so far as it may be, without offense to God, or the hindering of our own salvation: and taking all things in good part, as far as possibly we may. Oh how much doth he comfort the

life, and glad the heart of his neighbor, whose earnest endeavor it is, to live thus with all men! Though it be a gift of God, which should shine even in the rich themselves, as the Apostle showeth, saying: Charge them which are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, but easy to be lived withal.

But yet is it further required at our hands, that besides the hurting no man (as hath been said) we should do them good. And indeed, such should our whole course be towards others, that we might make easy as many men's burdens as we can, seeing God in the riches of his mercy, hath unburdened us of so intolerable weight, as pressed us by our sin: even as he hath loved us therefore, so from hence it is, that we have love one to another, as to have care of their life, and welfare, to maintain it, as their necessity shall require, and our ability can perform: To manifest it in their miseries by pitying them, and having a fellow-feeling of the same with them, and so to testify it both by words and deeds; as our Savior by doing the same in pitying the people, who were dispersed as sheep without a shepherd, gave us example, to do the like: And as their troubles and calamities shall be the greater; so the more speedily to lend our help to them, to ease them, as much as in us lieth.

That this may the better be conceived and practiced of us, we may take two examples for all the rest, to show it in: for this being so needful, and that oftentimes (I mean, to show mercy) and so much complained of, to be wanting, I will stay a while in it. The one is in the distressed case of servants, who if all hard measure being offered them, they must yet not be suffered to answer for their innocence, their burden should be great: Job therefore showed himself to have learned this compassion effectually, when as he saith, If I did condemn the judgment of my servant, and of my maid, when they did contend with me, what then shall I answer, when God standeth up

against me? For he that made me in the womb, hath he not made him? This (all men must needs say) is mercy to the life of our neighbor indeed, when we shall show compassion to them, whom we might oppress, as being not able to resist us.

The second example is of such as our Savior speaketh of, who visited him in his members (though many other who saw their misery did not so) saying: When I was hungry ye gave me meat: Here by his own words, we may see, that true compassion will show itself by relieving in time of need, and shutteth not up itself with an unsavory answer, as James speaketh, God provide for you. And as we should show our help, chiefly to the needy and poor, so ought we ever to be ready to help all other with whom we live, as they shall stand in need of it, by counsel, travail or the like: even as Simeon did his brother Judah against the Canaanites: and the rest of the tribes did Gideon against Midian, and the Amalekites.

But I will with adding a little more now make an end of this duty towards the life of our neighbor: That which I have said thereof, may teach, how pity is to be showed to the bodily necessities, as to the whole life of the needy and afflicted; and likewise how we must be ready to help all sorts that are distressed: and therefore much more to be harmless and innocent. Virtues they are of singular price, though little set by in this evil world: and yet he that is void of them, were better be out of the world. For both of them are accompanied with other virtues, which do set out the worth and beauty of them; even as a chain of gold, rings, and bracelets do beautify, and adorn a comely person. For the latter, that is, innocence and harmlessness, is accompanied with meekness, patience, and long suffering, without standing stiffly upon an offense, or hotly pursuing it, but easily passing by it. Also he that is harmless, is gentle, tractable, and soon entreated to forgive a trespass, though some can never be brought to

it: he is also peaceable and communicable, and fit to be lived with; which virtue is rare to be found. Therefore the innocent and harmless man is much to be set by: and as profitable to him who liveth with him, as of himself, he is commendable. And this is to be joined with the other virtue, which in this place, I before commended, namely helpfulness: and which hath adjoined to it, mercy and tender compassion to succor them that be in misery: and kind heartedness and goodness, as the scripture calleth it, to prevent evil and danger from our neighbor, before it take hold of him. And thus much of the duty which we owe to the body and life of our neighbors. That which remaineth, is of the regard and compassion which is to be had over their souls particularly. That seeing the multitude of bad examples is one especial emboldening of the world in evil: we, who are marked more than others, how we live after the Gospel, which we have in so great price, ought both to walk warily towards such, as are yet in unbelief, as well as unblameable amongst our brethren, that so we may hope, that one time or other, it may please God to call them home, as the Apostle speaketh to the believing wives: And who seeth not, that good example and innocent life, doth more move the ignorant, and unstayed persons at the first, then the doctrine, because though they hear it, yet they understand not the power and authority of it, neither are able to weigh the soundness of it, until they see the beauty of it appear in practice: And therefore he saith; Let your conversation be pure, that they which obey not the word, may be won by you.

With this holy example of life, another duty is required, that all occasions be taken, and the opportunities used of winning men to God, and of confirming them who are in Christ already, and peacemaking, and reconciling such as be at variance, and observing one another, and provoking to love, and good works, the fruits thereof, by instruction, by exhortation, admonition, consolation and

such like. If the desire of the salvation of our brethren were such, when opportunity serveth, and especially in company, as that for the same, we could neglect our own ease, and vain liberties in idleness, and unprofitable talk; there is no doubt, but by kind and wise dealing with them, we should prevail with some: especially this one thing being added, (a thing of all other most looked after) that with godly counsel, we pitied the necessities of those that be in wants, as their case requireth, and that with the bowels of compassion, whereby both their hearts are comforted, and they better prepared, to take good by our counsel and instructions, even as Boaz did to Ruth in both, when his kind and sweet words to her with his friendly dealing, caused her to say, Oh my Lord, thou hast comforted me, thou hast spoken to the heart of thine handmaid.

These two former duties being rightly observed and duly regarded, that is, that we honor the image of God in our neighbor, as it shall appear to us, and that with this humility we join tender love to his life and person, as now hath been said: we cannot rest there, but we must declare the same love in not hurting or grieving him in any good thing that he hath, and setteth by: neither can we in truth say, we love him, when we can be content for all that, to do the thing which we know, will offend and vex him. And therefore every Christian which hath this love in him, will be ready to give his neighbor his due in this commandment, not to attempt his honesty and chastity, which is principally forbidden in this precept. So that through this love to our neighbor, and all that is his, we must live so innocently and chastely, that none may have cause to complain, that they be hurt or annoyed by us, this way: and that we ourselves do warily shun, and avoid all occasions, whereby we know we might be in danger thereof.

Therefore for the better obtaining of this at our hands, God requireth this of us, that both our minds and bodies be chaste: the one pure from unclean lusts, desires, and thoughts tending to unchasteness: the other kept in honor (for so the Apostle calleth it) free from all executing of such unclean desires by any strange pleasures, which he condemneth. And therefore that all the parts of our bodies be kept continent, as well as the face, eyes, ears, tongue, hands, and feet be turned away from such occasions, as may lead thereunto.

And this is commanded to the unmarried, and to those which are married; but yet with some consideration, and regard had in the same. The unmarried, that they see, that through an especial gift of God, their abstaining from marriage be according to the rules before set down. And for this cause, that they be very wary and circumspect in the use of all lawful liberties, as of meats, drinks, apparel, sleep, recreations: and that they give themselves devoutly to all exercises of godliness, and amongst the rest to fasting with prayer, as they in wisdom shall see cause, always remembering, that the unmarried are they who may best care for the things of the Lord; how they may please him. By the which means notwithstanding, if they shall feel and perceive, that they cannot serve God with peace, as in time past, but that their minds and bodies are haled, and distracted, the one by strong lusts carrying them, the other by burnings; they must know, that they are called to the use of the remedy, which God hath in this case provided for their behoove and relief, that is, the change of their estate, marrying in the Lord.

The married couples being cut off (as I have said) from all other, save themselves, must know that their sin is tenfold greater than the others, if they shall be found either secretly attempting, or openly defiling themselves, whereby it may be seen, that they do not regard and conscionably seek to preserve the chastity of their neighbor, a



thing provided for by the Lord most principally in this precept: but rather let them know how to use their liberty rightly, which God hath in this behalf, granted them: That is to say, that they marrying in the Lord, may also live in the Lord together: and (to speak more plainly) as they have married, with hope, they shall find more help thereby unto godliness, then they could have enjoyed alone without it (seeing marriage was ordained by God himself, an helpful estate many ways, Gen. 2:18.) so they dwell together according to knowledge, to perform the more easily all duties one to the other for their mutual help, and comfort in the communion of their goods, graces and persons.

But though God accounteth the marriage bed undefiled, and the use of it lawful, for the increase of posterity, and the subduing of concupiscence: yet to the end that God's people may remove from them much unseemly profaneness therein, which the irreligious sort invent to themselves, who never use to look further into their liberties, if they understand once that they be lawful; and to the end they may have the right use thereof, God hath taught them to sanctify the marriage bed with prayer and thanksgiving, and that nothing be done betwixt themselves to the wound of conscience, or the breaking of their peace. And that is the true use of it, when they are made the more fit and cheerful thereby, to all duties of holiness, or at leastwise never the unfitter, which is to live in marriage, even as if they were not married, and so live more happily: whereas to live otherwise, is a great abuse thereof. And as for the Papists malicious railing on married persons, that they live in y e flesh, and serve not God, as Pope Siricius: to their shame be it spoken, y t God hath made known his will in this commandment, as clearly as in the rest: and given grace to then which fear him, to obey him in the same either minister or private person, more then to them, who in pride and hypocrisy, or in blind intention have vowed against it. If they had

complained, that the married estate is through the ignorance and profaneness of the world much blemished, and (for so honorable an ordinance of God) defaced, the most being careless in the use of their liberties, they had spoken to good purpose, and might have had many to confirm their saying: But to challenge holiness as proper to themselves in their vowing against it, is rather arrogancy and folly, then sound reason which requireth a substantial answer; especially, except they could show us more glorious proofs of holiness in their professed Votaries.

## CHAP. 17.

Of some duties to men in the eighth, ninth, and tenth commandments.

Another part of righteous dealing with our brethren is, that they be not injured by us in their goods, which God hath given them, for their necessary use and comfort in this life: And therefore, as we would desire ourselves to enjoy with safety, and without fear, the portion which by God's goodness is fallen unto us, even so should our neighbor live by us without danger, or just cause of complaining, that he is any way annoyed by us. Loe this is the order which God hath taken and strongly provided for, that if he be regarded amongst us, we shall not dare be bold to injury one another in the smallest piece of his commodities, but give him his own, as the commandment chargeth us, saying, Thou shalt not steal: and as another Scripture saith: Owe nothing to any man but this, that ye love him. And if we love him, how can we grieve him, in withholding that from him, (as was said before) which is dear unto him?

So that, where the case is plain, that anything is another man's, we cannot so much as lay claim to it, but God is despised of us. But seeing it is doubtful oft times whose the right is; and the most contentions, and uncharitableness's arise from hence, that it cannot easily nor clearly be seen into, whose it is indeed: here therefore, although men without Christ, will not easily be advised, yet the Lord hath provided, that his servants shall be ordered, for the retaining of love and righteous dealing: That partly they shall forgo somewhat of their own right, as Abraham did to Lot (if it shall be thought expedient) rather than to break the bond of love; partly, if it be in such a matter as is made doubtful by the subtlety, negligence, or

other default of either party (as when a bargain is made, and yet left uncertain in some point, which after breedeth contention) the damage ought to fall on him, through whom it came: and if it be otherwise so difficult, that it cannot betwixt themselves be determined, let other men of wisdom take it in hand, that if it be possible, suite of law may be avoided; and yet if that cannot be, let it in love be prosecuted.

Thus much generally, to show, that God will have equity maintained in the coming by, and enjoining of our commodities, and no man wronged in the least part of his goods by us. But for the more clear beholding of our duties in this branch of obedience, or righteousness (seeing they are many) it is very expedient, to lay them forth more particularly, according to the diverse states of men. Therefore, as some are merely poor men, and by God's appointment and ordinance, do live by alms: other can in some sort partly maintain themselves, but not without the help of others, by borrowing of them: and the third sort is able to lend, or to give, or to do both: therefore according to these diverse sorts of men, the several points of righteous dealing one with another, must be spoken of: and those which are beside this, shall be considered afterwards.

They who have no other way to live, or to be maintained, but by receiving men's benevolence, have their proper duty assigned them of God, about their neighbor's goods, first to know, that their poor estate is allotted them of God, as the rich man's is also: according to the Scripture, which saith, The Lord maketh poor, and he maketh rich: and therefore he is to live in it with contentation. As also he may do, if he know God to be his father through Christ his redeemer: for there is encouragement enough from thence, to live contentedly and comfortably in any condition, in the which God shall set him: For want of the which, it is, that neither poor nor rich are contented

without hunting after that which is another man's. Now as it is the poor man's duty, to be contented with his portion: so it is in no sort tolerable in him, to grudge at other men's abundance; for shall his eye be evil seeing God is good? Neither ought he so much as to wish the same, and so to injury his neighbor: but to receive thankfully that which befalleth him, acknowledging such to be God's instruments, and as it were his hands, whereby he ministereth to his necessities. And because the people of God, which either sent relief to the poor of other Churches, as they of Macedonia, and Corinth to Jerusalem; or who provided for their poor, as they in the Acts; they did it to encourage them, to remain and abide constant in the doctrine of the Gospel: therefore the poor which live with us, must know this, and look to perform this duty also, that having such encouragement, they make it their chief work to live godly and obediently: That is to say, to glad their hearts, who refresh their bodies, when they may see their innocent conversation, and zeal to Godward according to their knowledge.

But I lament the estate of the poor, even as I do many thousands of others, to think how few of them are fit to hear this their duty with any hope to be the better for it: and what an universal blindness and security is amongst them; seeing they are as far from the desire of true knowledge, as they are from possibility of obtaining it, yea though there be offered unto them a plain and easy manner of teaching them: which as it is at this day for the most part, in that estate to be seen, so it seemeth to have been usual among such long ago; that the poor lived for the most part without care of religion, as by Jeremiah his words doth appear. Who when he had, after inquiry, found, that there were few that sought the truth, he said: Surely they are poor; for they know not the law of the Lord: I will get me to the great men, for they have known the way of the Lord: but these have altogether broke the yoke, and burst the bonds. God move the hearts

of them (in whom it lieth to redress it) to pity the one and the other: and to have a greater care of their good (by providing that they may be taught the salvation, and happiness of Christians) then they (being yet ignorant) have care of themselves: Even to be means to bring light to some of them, who have long sat in darkness, and especially for the obtaining of the forgiveness of their sins, and the change of their lives.

But I must remember, that I am in setting down the duties of all Christians about the goods of their neighbors: although entire pity hath moved me to make this short digression. The last duty therefore of this sort of poor people, is, with the former, that as much as they be able, and their bodily infirmities of age, blindness, lameness, and such other, will suffer them, that they redeem their time from idleness, and consequently from other evil passing of the same, to do any profitable work which they are fit for, ever tying their hearts, eyes, and hands from pulling to them, or desiring that which is another's.

The second sort that I am to deal with here, are they, who cannot live by their labor alone, but stand in need of the help of others by borrowing something of them, that so they may the better provide for themselves, and theirs. Their duty is, carefully and faithfully to purpose the restoring of that, which they borrowed, at the day appointed, and that with thanks. And therefore in no wise to abuse their creditor, by a dishonest denying of it, or unwillingness to repay it: thereby, and by other delays seeking to defraud him, and think hardly of him, if he requireth it; which to do, is as if they counted it their own, and a kind of theft: and so they shut up men's compassion from lending: For a chief cause of little lending, is evil paying. It is further required of them, that they borrow not without need; as many do, to maintain themselves in play, and idleness: for by that

means they deprive him, who hath need indeed to borrow, seeing the lender cannot pleasure both. And although they find favor to borrow for their necessity, yet they must not look to borrow that, which they are not like to pay again, by taking more dealings into their hands, then their ability will serve unto: for many undo themselves, and others, by that means: much less may they borrow to lend to another for usury, as we call it. Lastly, if their simple meaning in purposing to repay it at the due time, be disappointed; yet their care must be, to satisfy their creditor, and content him, with promising new day, and paying part, and every way that they can (except it be forgiven them altogether) to show, that they were not faulty, nor negligent in this matter.

And this for the borrower: now as concerning such as are able to give, and to lend, first I will set down their duties in those respects, and how they should use their goods, to the end they may continue this duty of lending and giving still: after, I will show what rules of righteous dealing they must use in the getting and increasing of their goods, with all men, and in all kinds of their dealings, that so they may be free from this common evil, of wronging any, in their commodities.

They who give, must give freely, not by compulsion, and cheerfully, desiring thereby to relieve and comfort them who receive it, for charity and conscience sake; as the necessity of the poor body requireth, and their ability will give leave: and so, as they may give to one, as well as to another, and continue the same duty: and in greatest necessity to stretch out their hand the more largely, without the which necessity they may continue their patrimony and inheritance, to their posterity.

The lender is bound to help his neighbor, such an one (I mean) as I have described the borrower to be: if he be able to forgo it, and for the appointed time that he hath lent it, not to require it again: and to receive it at the due time without any commodity; much less to compound or agree with him for any: for whiles he pretendeth to seek his poor neighbors commodity, and yet thereby laboreth to seek his own advantage, with the others hurt, that were intolerable. But yet it is lawful for him to take a pledge of him, if he doubt of his credit, so that it be not his bed, or such a necessary thing as he cannot well spare: And yet if he see that it cannot be repaid without hazard of his undoing, he must bear with him, and show compassion either for a time, or forgiving it wholly unto him.

These things considered and wisely regarded, what should it grieve them, whom God hath endued with riches, and the commodities of this life, more than they need (to the end he may prove them, what liberality they will show to their poor flesh) to reach out their hand, as they see most need both in giving and lending, and there especially, where God hath placed them, and to their own kindred? And for this cause, men ought to know, that they should be more moderate in spending wastefully upon others (where they need not, neither doth any charity bind them) or upon themselves in diet, apparel, or such like: considering that he which hath made them able to give, might and could have made them stand in need to receive: and therefore we have the poor always amongst us, that we may do good to them. But all is too little for men's selves, by means either of a licentious wasting; as excess and needless sumptuousness of clothing, and providing for their bodies, or by a miserable pinching and hoarding up for their posterity; that they may exceed and pass their bounds; and that they may match any of their equals to the utmost: whatsoever cometh in by the year, or by the quarter, they have a bottomless bag to put it in; none are the better for it, but



themselves and theirs: whereas indeed, none are more the worse for it, then themselves, and theirs, as we see it oft to come to pass; they themselves coming to an heavy reckoning for it, their children for the most part, spending it wastefully. But I cannot now bring examples, which in scripture and experience, are innumerable. And whereas there are two sorts of them, who have goods for their destruction: the one hath no other thought abiding with him, but about increasing, though he know not why, and perhaps have neither child nor brother: of whom it is verified, that the covetous never doth good, till he be dead, like the water in the ice, which never is profitable, until it be thawed. The other sort go so far in satisfying the desire of the heart, and the lust of the eye, and take such pride, and jollity in their life, whiles they have that, which they would, that instead of giving and lending, they have not sufficient at the years end to satisfy all their expenses: what do I say, to satisfy, when they are a whole years revenue afore hand in charges, besides other debt: so that they, who might with Job have comforted the hearts of many poor men by lending, are fain to grieve the hearts of many, and those meaner then themselves, by borrowing; or which is all one, by deferring of them, who have need to use it being their own, that they may verify the words of the wise man; There is an evil sickness that I have seen under the sun: to wit, riches reserve to the owners thereof for their hurt.

And thus much of lending, whereby this one thing may appear, that lending is an help appointed of God, for the relief and ease of the poor (without taking anything for it, and so oppressing him thereby with usury) which could not otherwise maintain their charge; rather than for the benefit and behoove of such as are well able to live. Which sort of men yet if in some extremity, they stand in need, and have no way to provide for it, but by diminishing of their inheritance, or by impairing their stock and trade, in such a case for a present

necessity, shall not offend, if they require and seek help by borrowing, for some short time (so as they be ready to afford the like help again in the like need:) But to do this for the increasing of their patrimony, or for any long time, and any great sum; otherwise then by agreement betwixt both parties, that the like gratifying of his part may be performed, if he will require it, there is no band in Christianity so straight, that it tieth the one party to lend it; nor any liberty therein so large, that it giveth leave to the other to request it. Both which, I draw from the general law, which all must be subject to: namely, Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, the same do ye unto them: and contrariwise.

Now concerning suretyship, this briefly is to be said (seeing it is of the like nature unto lending.) Although it should pity us to see a man fallen into danger to his creditor through any default; yet no duty bindeth us to take upon us for him, to meddle where we have nothing to do, except it were in a matter of so small value, that by benefiting him, we should not hurt ourselves greatly. But otherwise we have commandment oftentimes to beware of it: As where it is said; Be not thou of them who are sureties for debt: And again: If thou hast stricken hand, and entered into suretyship, thou art snared: And so by needless dealing in other men's business, they bring upon themselves needless troubles, and are also oft hindered from following their own calling.

But yet least we should think that in no case, this duty were to be performed, we must know, that for such as are known of us to be approved Christians, or our brethren, with good advice we may, that is, so far as we are able to bear the burden: as Reuben did offer a pledge to his father, for the safe bringing back of Benjamin his younger brother. But if any such weight should lie upon it, as that our undoing and utter impoverishing should thereby be procured, I

say with Solomon, Why shouldest thou cause thy bed to be taken from under thee, when thou hast nothing to pay? For of thee it shall be required.

Now the duties of righteousness which follow, are such, as we are bound to perform towards all in our common dealings, whereby we increase our commodities: that in none of them, we be justly charged to do them any wrong.

First therefore let every man see, that his vocation and trade, by which he getteth his living, be approved of God, and profitable to men, as the Apostle willeth: and therefore, that they be no idle persons, Parasites, Jesters, Jugglers, sturdy Rogues, Players, or other gamesters, dicers, carders, and such like. Then, that they deal lawfully in every part of it, that righteousness may be preserved by them: In buying and selling, that the one give his penny for his pennyworth; fully satisfying also the travail of the other, and cost that he hath been at: and that the seller perform his pennyworth as good as is agreed for, and faithfully: and therefore deceitful ware, unjust weights, unequal measures, delay in time, wherein it should be performed, and such like, ought to be far off from the practice of a sound Christian: for herein promise is to be kept, though to the man's hindrance that made it.

The same I say of hiring, and letting, that neither party alone be regarded, but indifference used (as much as may be) for the mutual good of both, until the time agreed upon, betwixt them, be expired. Partnership and fellowship in bargaining, when both are at the like cost, or the ones labor and travail goeth with the others money, by their mutual agreement, this kind of contract (I say) giveth no liberty to the one to provide for himself, without regarding the other; but faithfully and truly to deal, that they may both be partners in losses,

and in gain: neither justly openeth the mouth of others, to condemn it.

These being the most usual kinds of contracts, do show the nature of the rest, which are in use amongst men, and do leave no place to that oppression in the world, called usury, or any other such seeking of men's private profit in their dealings, without regard of the common benefit of both: when both parties are not provided for, to their contentation and satisfying according to equity, and to the meaning and provision made by God in that behalf: which is, that the one without the other should not be benefited nor enriched; but the one to have care and consideration of the other, and the commonwealth of both (as I have said) respected. Which if it were regarded betwixt both parties, could in no wise be justly complained of; neither is such dealing of the nature and kind of usury, whether it be in hiring and letting, or in any other kind of contract whatsoever: but that common dealing for ten in the hundred, or nine, or eight, or any such like, which is without due consideration of the commonwealth and upholding of both, is utterly to be condemned. Which if it be well and duly considered, will soon answer all conscionable men, about the question of usury and oppression, that there can be no use of them in the Church of God, nor the Christian commonwealth: the Law-maker having said of both, as of witchcraft and of idolatry, there shall be none such in Israel, that is, among God's people. And as for teaching others their duty (especially in money matters) who have not given themselves in full resolution to be guided by God's word, Preachers may sooner wear their tongues to the stump, then they may prevail with them. But there is another thing, of which, some professing the Gospel, desire to be resolved, and that is about the buying and selling of annuities: and whether they be not unlawful.

Of this therefore by so good occasion, as is here offered, I think it convenient, to set down the will of God and our duties: and the rather for the ignorance of many about this point, and for the satisfying and answering of the well-disposed Christian. For this purpose, we are to know, that by annuities are meant, certain yearly rents or revenues coming in, for some years space: and that the owner may sell them quite away for his own behoove, there is no more doubt, then there is of selling his patrimony or inheritance itself (if it be expedient) which is (as we call it) perpetual.

Now further, there are two sorts of annuities bought and sold among men. The one is, a yearly sum of money for years, when the seller hath no such annuity, but as he hopeth to make it of his labor and commodities. The other is, a certain revenue, rent, or part of rent, which he enjoyeth, and is willing to forgo it. The first sort is full of danger, and causeth much wrangling, disagreeing, and contention betwixt the buyer and seller. And no marvel, when that is bought and sold which the seller hath not: I mean, when there is no such, either for him to enjoy at his time, who hath bought it, or for the other to perform that hath sold it: Much like them, who sell Hops or Corn, before they see whether they shall have any to perform or no. In this case, the change of the price causeth the one party to repent him, and so he studieth how he may shift for himself, by what means soever. And indeed no former bargains do commonly end without jars and controversies: neither ought any to make them, before the proof of their commodities, except they be both able to bear, and also willing to stand to the uttermost of the hurt, that may befall them. But to return to annuities: let not him who is wise and peaceable, meddle with this first kind of them.

Now concerning the second, there is no doubt (as I have said) but that a man may help himself with his own: and therefore such

annuities may be lawfully and Christianly bought and sold. But where (then) is the danger in this kind of traffic? I answer, it may be on the behalf of both parties. On the sellers, by fraudulent and crafty dealing: as if he have either sold the same annuity before to another; or if he know it to be litigious, and encumbered, and so he selleth sorrow and trouble to his neighbor, in steed of a commodity. This dealing is so gross, and branded with the mark of infamy and dishonesty by the Lord himself, that I need say no more of it. On the buyers behalf, the sin and offense is, when he knowing the other must sell, and within a certain time, holdeth him off, as though he cared not for it, to the end he may have it, not according to the worth of it, and as many other will give, but for a little; perhaps half the value, and so copeth him up, and sucketh out of him no small advantage. This is a grinder of his neighbor. Thus come in the annuities that gripe more than ten in the hundred, when the seller might, if he had had good measure, have made his benefit almost as much more. This dealing, if it be used towards the wealthy, is rank oppression, when the buyer lieth thus in the wind, as it were, and will not give according to the value: but if it be practiced upon the weak stated, and men behind hand, it is as the plucking off their skin from their body. If it be asked, what commodity a man may reap lawfully this way: I say, if he buy the annuity or rent of him, who is wealthy, so as there be plain dealing, he may safely enjoy the benefit which the other offereth: If he be but weak or in debt who selleth it, let him be sure he give to the uttermost value, and in token that he doth so, let him not be unwilling to release him again afterwards: which shall always prove, that he seeketh no advantage by him. And this of annuities, both to direct a Christian how to deal in them, and to answer such as think (without any ground) that no dealing about them is lawful, what our liberty is. Now that all may come by, and enjoy their right in these, and in all other usual contracts, exchanges, societies, and dealings amongst men (for want whereof are the most

broils and contentions in the world) let this be, for conclusion marked, that truth in words, equity in deeds, and simple meaning in purposes and thoughts, is to be firmly and constantly retained: and where that hath not been practiced, full restitution is to be made.

Now another duty is, to restore to the right owner, the thing which we find, if we can know him, and not to count it our own. Also to restore faithfully and without delay anything which is committed to our keeping for trust, and not to defraud the party: whether executors of the will of the dead, or guardians, that take upon them the care of orphans living: that as the beloved Disciple John being put in trust by his Lord and Master, with Mary his mother to regard her, was faithful, and took her home to him, John. 19:27, even so may they be true and just in that which is committed unto them. The Lawyer also, to take no causes into his hands, which he seeth can have no good end with equity, and those which he doth become defender of, to show all honest faithfulness, and diligence in following of them: That they in whom it lieth, make no delays in the ending of the suites which come before them, but with all expedition possible dispatch the same: that their light may break forth clearly as the noontide. Which grace is commended in Job thorough all the world, where it is heard of, that he restrained not the poor of their desire, nor caused the eyes of the widow to fail, by long waiting for her request.

Last of all, to suffer all men to enjoy their own, and as neither by play, lotteries, laying of wagers, neither by force, violence, or any kind of oppression; so neither by deceit and craft, we seek or procure the hurt of our neighbor, to increase our own profit. And thus I have set down a sum of the chief duties, which our God hath bound us to perform towards our neighbor, concerning his goods, that we be found no way unrighteous in our practice and dealings with him, but

suffer him to live safely by us, as he trusteth to do: wherein though I have laid out nothing in any large manner (which was not my purpose to do further then need requireth) yet he that considereth how many duties here are to be performed, shall see it the more needful to have a brief rehearsal of them, being so many; to the which, as to a glass, he may repair when he will, rather than to desire some few of them, handled more largely, with omission of the rest. In these duties performing, who so setteth himself to delight, and maketh it his pleasure to walk after these rules; and when he can find by due observing himself (that he hath taken anything wrongfully) to turn back unlawful gain: as his liberty shall be great with the Lord, and his confidence strong, when he seeth that for his cause and for the hope of the reward promised him, he can be willing to deny himself, and his own will: so his example shall be highly commended, and do much good amongst men: And yet this should not be to seek with such as go for God's servants, as it is written: It is joy to the just to do judgment. And let it be remembered that I here teach them, who profess that they are willing to learn, not the scorner. To conclude: let not only the forementioned sins against this commandment be avoided, and the contrary duties practiced: but let us every way so use our goods, that we may be thereby more fruitful in every good work, then we could be if we wanted them: else how shall we be able to give a good account to our Lord and Master, and to say: Behold, Lord, here are thy five, or two talents: I have gained with them many more? Luk. 19:18.

The next duty wherein we are to serve our neighbor through love, and to deal righteously with him, is about his name. Herein our love must show itself to be such, that we be afraid to vex or grieve him this way, as well as in his person or goods. The sins have been mentioned more at large, which are committed against this commandment, the duties shall be put in a narrower room. One of



the which is, to rejoice in the good report of as many as we can hear, and be persuaded of: as the Apostle did for the good name of the elect Lady, who had so carefully walked after the Gospel herself, that by her fervent travail, he had found her children also doing the same. This rejoicing for the good name of others, banisheth this secret repining at the same, and envying them for it, and the poisoned desire of vain glory, out of our selves; to the which belongeth this: that we sorrow for their infirmities: so far it ought to be off from us, to report them, or hear them of others with delight.

Another is, to hope through patience for better things, then as yet can be seen in men, remembering what we ourselves have been sometime: and therefore not rashly to judge and condemn such, so much as secretly, and least of all to make them odious in company by uttering their crimes, or allowing others to do so, of whom we have good hope. Concerning the rest who sin boldly, I say: Let Baal plead for himself: for such as defame themselves by their wicked behavior, are not injured by us in giving warning of them. It is also further required of us here, that as we shall be able, and may get good opportunity thereunto, we help to cover these faults of theirs through love, who may be recovered and brought to repentance: and yet not by flattering them therein, or dissembling the same (for that is rank hating of them, when we by suffering them to go on in their sins, cause them thereby to come to some open shame and punishment:) but do we rather, as the Apostle James expoundeth this hiding of faults, saying: He that shall convert a sinner from going astray, shall save a soul; and hide the multitude of sins.

Thus we should labor to keep them from an evil name (who are not shameless) and so from further danger, by this our telling them of their faults; which if they be not yet gone abroad, may by it be amended: But as for open and bold defamers of others, they are not

to be dealt with privately, when their slander is spread far, but to be censured by the magistrate, that so taking shame for their sin, they may be brought to repentance. And this remedy, as it may, so it ought to be sought and used in love, even as the other by reproof and admonition: and by these means (the Lord blessing them) both sorts may blot out the remembrance of their sins, both before God and men.

To this duty belongeth another, much agreeing with the former: that is, not to bewray a secret, when it may safely and without displeasing of God, be kept in: For both this and the former go so heavily to the heart of our neighbors, when they hear that we have no regard of them, where it might do them good; neither do spare, by enlarging of the report of that which was secret before, to increase their misery and infamy: though they have loved us before, yet now their hearts are turned from us (though that be their sin) for that they see us not bearing a part of their grief and sorrow with them, but to publish that, which we know of them, by want of love to them. For every truth, and the whole truth, is not always to be uttered; although all kind of lying and slander be always to be abhorred. I say further, if we should speak of men's faults with bewailing them, or with a desire that they, to whom we utter them, might help to redress them; yet could we not be justified in so doing, except we have used all means which we know, to amend them, and (when there is no other remedy) go about the opening of the same, as it were, unwillingly; and in loving faithfulness, reveal it only to such a one, as is likeliest and fittest to reform them, and not please ourselves therein: In which case the house of Chloe sent word to the Apostle Paul, that there were dissensions in the Church of Corinth. But here let this be considered, that all reports of men's faults are not to be admitted, least we should nourish the slanderer, Prov. 25:23, nor all such reports to be rejected, or coldly reprov'd, least we should embolden

the offender, and the committer of them, 1. Sam. 2:22,23, but so far as they may be proved; that the guilty may be duly censured, as Paul did the Corinthians: but not without proof, least the slanderer should be fleshed: for the which cause David said to Saul in this very case, why doth the King give an ear to them which say, David seeketh to kill thee? 1. Sam. 24:9. It is moreover required of us, that we uphold the good name of our neighbor, when we be in place, where he is unchristianly and reproachfully spoken of, that so we may cause slander and envy to cease: and not to deliver him being innocent, in such a case, when we may, is little differing from defaming him, our selves. Which was the sin of those cruel Jews mentioned in the Acts; who when Paul was accused as an evil doer, stood by; allowing the same against him, who knew, that those things were not so; and if they had rightly learned to practice this part of duty, would have answered in his defense. But the neglect of this duty is the greater, if it be done in a public case before many, as that was against the Apostle, when the Judge will not give sentence, the deponent will not speak the truth on the side of him, who is falsely and unjustly brought in question; and the accuser will not let his suite fall, as they see they ought, and should do: but indirectly at least, do pursue him, either making a small crime in him to be an odious offense; or when he is innocent and clear, yet charge him as a trespasser.

It is our duty also, by our hand writing, or any other credit bringing unto him, whose good conversation is approved of us, to free his name from unjust reproach: yea, and if the case be weighty and urgent, so far as we be privy to his innocence, not to be unwilling to free him by our oath. There is yet another thing, wherein our love should show itself towards our neighbor, as necessarily as in any of the rest: And that is, by uprightness of heart, and kindness to interpret all such of his sayings and doings, as may be well taken, in the best part; and not for some little blemish, and as it were half a

fault, to deface the whole: and to be free from surmising and conceitedness about that which cannot be proved, and brought to light: As godly Joseph is commended to have been in judging of Mary; and as the Apostles, who judged simply of Judas himself, so long as they saw him not convicted. And this we should do the rather, not to stand upon the uttermost, as through uncharitableness being able to bear with nothing: For who doth not know, both how prone our nature is to be meddling, and going too far? About such uncertainties: and also, that when we have concluded and given sentence, as though there were no doubt in the matter, yet it falleth out oftentimes, that we were (and that to our great shame) merely led with rashness, and utterly deceived? (Which cannot be more clearly seen, then in Saul against David and Jonathan, both by bare conceit against both, 1. Sam. 22, and by hearkening amiss to Doeg against one of them, verse. 11.) To our shame, I say, because what shame almost can be greater, then first to take that in the evil part, which was never so meant? And from so thinking of it, to proceed to rash judgment accordingly? Like him in the Gospel, who seeing our Savior to admit a penitent woman near unto him, who had before that, been an offensive liver, proceeded immediately to this conclusion: If this man were a prophet, he would surely have known what manner of woman this is, for she is a grievous sinner. But this taking all things in ill part will not be amended in us, before we begin to censure ourselves sharply for known offenses which lurk in us: wherein, when we shall see how slenderly and coldly we set upon them, we shall be enforced to confess, that our rigor was too severe against others, especially for bare surmises of faults, which had no sufficient ground. As for those, of whom we through charity think the best, when yet we sometimes see them prove otherwise, and ourselves deceived in them, I say it maketh no matter: we have done but our duty, to be charitable minded towards them. And as for them, their sin is their own, and shall double their punishment, in as

much as they have deceived our hope, which we had of them: for if there were any spark of goodness in them, our good hope of them, would make them ashamed to deceive our expectation. Yet let us not be fools in judging well of them, whose minds and purposes we know to be evil by their words, conversation, and long knowledge of them, or by such like testimonies of their profaneness and boldness in sin: for that were unsavory and silly foolishness: and (whiles we would go about to be charitable) to show ourselves ungodly in calling evil good: and to forget the commandment of our Savior, who saith, beware of men: therefore much more beware how ye commend them. Of such we should make no scruple nor doubt to know, and think of them to be wicked as they be, and to give warning to others, who are simple and innocent; and therefore might easily be deceived, and mocked by them: as Peter did to them who were converted, when he said to them; Save yourselves from this froward generation, meaning those who had been their companions.

Thus it behooveth us to examine our dealings with our neighbors credit, and good name, that as we have learned to think and conceive: so we teach our tongues to speak the best of all men, and ill of none, whose doings have not in an obstinate and stiff-necked manner spoken worse of themselves: so that they have cast away their good name themselves (although more precious than gold) and not we, who give that due to them (in making this account of them) which they themselves seem to desire, and do most truly deserve: So we shall in this part of righteousness also, as in the former, make our rejoicing sound. But above all that hath been said of this argument, let our chiefest care be, that we stain not our own good name and credit any way, but maintain and preserve it.

The last part of duty to our neighbor, is to acquaint our hearts with the thoughts and desires of his good: and to bring ourselves to this

custom and practice, that whatsoever in these five former precepts and fountains of neighborly duty, we are commanded to perform to him, the same by virtue of this, we oft wish, desire, and delight in, seeing our God will have it so, that thus the contrary lusting's after that which is his, may (as the most unsavory vomit) be cast up, and avoided of us. But this duty of desiring that our neighbor may prosper, which should be felt to dwell in us, as a daily guest, and which should rise up and lie down with us, and throughout our course accompany us, behold it is at this day, such a stranger to the most, even who go for good Christians, that it is almost buried amongst men, save that God of his goodness hath some few, who keep it in remembrance, that the rest may know, that such practice he looketh for of all his servants. For though it be written in the book of God, never to be raced out by the Serpents subtlety, yet except some lively pattern of it may be seen in men's lives, the practice of it, as of many other excellent truths beside, do grow into unaccustomedness, even as the manifest and clear path, being not usually trodden, is soon covered with weeds and grass.

And this part of righteousness must find more care in us for the performance of it, because the well regarding of this duty maketh us the better able to serve our neighbor in all the former. And ought we not to wean our hearts from dreaming after anything that is his, when we can in no wise abide that the like measure should be offered us? And also because we have consecrated our hearts to the Lord's use, to be taken up in the delighting in those things which please him? And if we love him, we should consider, that love thinketh none evil of our neighbor, nor intendeth any hurt against him: yet when his profits, and lawful liberties, and delights are wished to be ours, I deny not but we can and do persuade ourselves, that for all this we love him: but the Scripture which saith, as ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them, shall condemn us for it. Alas,

do we not see, that all the encouragements and helps, which we have in this life (through the exceeding naughtiness of our hearts) are all little enough to carry us through all hindrances? And shall we then add sorrow to sorrow upon such, as we ourselves are? Or repine, that they may more easily go on to eternal life, by such helps as God giveth them? And therefore desire that which is precious to them, that so they may be holden back, if not utterly oppressed, through the want of them with heaviness? It was far from him, who said, I would thou wert altogether as I am (that is, unfeignedly a Christian) but yet without the bands which I have.

Therefore let us know, and rest in this, that the mark which we must aim at, is this: that in living with our neighbor, we desire neither his hurt in person, goods, or name; but count it the greatest joy that we have by our fellowship and acquaintance with him, when we can rejoice in his welfare and prosperity both outward and inward: and therefore heartily desire and wish it from time to time, and in one thing as well as in another, and give those thoughts or lusts small rest in us, which stir us to the contrary: That so we may declare, that we have the same spirit which was in the Apostle; which taught him to say; I wish that thou prosperedst, even as thy soul prospereth. And here to shut up this matter with a word or two of sobriety (which is a virtue more properly concerning ourselves, rather than the person of God or our neighbor, consisting in the moderating of our affections in the use of things lawful) this I say in few words: that we must have special care to use all our lawful liberties, both in the works of our calling, and in buying, selling, moderately and aright. And the same I say of eating, drinking, marriage, recreation, prosperity, youth, age, beauty, friends, strength; because I would briefly conclude with the Apostle in this wise: This I say (brethren) because the time is short hereafter, that they which have wives, be as though they had none: and they that weep, as though they wept not: and they that rejoice, as

though they rejoiced not: and they that buy, as though they possessed not: and they that use the world, as not abusing it. For the fashion of this world goeth away. He therefore that looketh to these things so, that he live in the use of his lawful liberties, to make them serve him (that he may better serve God) and not he them; that man may be said to be sober indeed, and he shall have great rejoicing, whatsoever the world think of him.

These duties I have thought good to set down together, as it were in one view, before the eyes of the reader, that he may fetch from hence, light to show him the way, and matter to season his heart and life, when he shall wax empty, barren, and forgetful. And for the more large and full handling of them, or the exact setting down of all particulars, it was not my purpose, and it would have been too large, seeing in one Catechism or other, and in sundry treatises, as also by ordinary teaching (such as enjoy the same) may be satisfied in that thing: which particulars, all true Christians must be very careful to know, after that they be willing to be directed. Now after what manner we may draw a daily direction out of this whole treasury of godliness, it shall in fit place hereafter appear, when I come to show what way God hath taught us to walk in, throughout every day.

And now I having finished that which I purposed about the sins to be renounced, and the duties to be practiced in a godly life; here understand that this renouncing of evil and turning from it, and the contrary practicing of duty, is nothing else but repentance, and the selfsame thing. And the bringing forth of the fruits of amendment or of repentance, is all one with that living by faith, which the Scripture calleth the life of the righteous, or a Christian conversation. The which I make mention of, that none may think, that the godly life, the living by faith, and the repentant life, are diverse things the one from the other: which might raise much trouble in many to think: so



that when they have labored much and travailed painfully in one of them, they should be new to begin in the other. But seeing the holy Ghost in the Scriptures doth lay forth the life of the believer in sundry manners of speech (everyone setting out the nature and property thereof for the more full and clear understanding of it) it is meet we should not be ignorant of it.

And as I said, that this godly life which I have written of, is all one with the bringing forth fruits of amendment or of repentance, and living by faith, and no strange nor new or diverse thing from it, thus in few words I show. Concerning the one, I mean the bringing forth the fruits of repentance, what is it else, but for the person who is assured of salvation and of the forgiveness of his sins, to turn to the Lord, and to come under his government, from the power of Satan and sin? And in full purpose of heart to labor to be reformed from day today more and more? And what other thing in substance, hath been spoken by me in the description of a godly life? And those things about it I have chiefly handled; which may especially instruct the believer, what true godliness is, and how he may be able to practice it. Now for the other, of living by faith, what is it also but a relying upon the word of God, with full purpose to be guided by it, either by resting upon his promises (I understand not here the promise of salvation) or obeying his commandments? And a godly conversation is even the same: that is, an endeavoring to live after the word of God, which teacheth us to believe, that he will enable us thereto, and bless us therein. So that, he that liveth not godly, liveth not by faith: nor he liveth not by faith, who doth not live godly.

And now to shut up this point, namely, wherein a godly life doth consist: a little more I will add, of living by faith, as I promised in the beginning of this treatise, where I showed that this faith to believe the spiritual and temporal promises of this life, must be conceived

and wrought in us, before we can live by it. We are therefore to know, that after the Lord hath given this gift of faith ( for it is the gift of God ) he requireth, that we should live by the same faith: and that is, not only to believe throughout our life, that we shall be saved in the life to come; but also, that we shall have whatsoever is expedient to bring us safely thither, given us freely by the Lord in this life: I say, faith reacheth to, and layeth hold of the promises of both, even as God hath given us both. So that to live by faith, is a most glorious and rich prerogative, as we may see: and so should we be able by good proof and experience to say, if we would be persuaded, but to take a taste of the benefit and sweetness that it bringeth: for if we did but taste of it, we would never suffer ourselves to be withdrawn and plucked from it anymore, as far as in us lieth. For by this faith, we are confident, and rest quietly about our salvation from time to time; whereas others, who live not by it, do waver and are oft unsettled, even the best; and therefore much disquieted. By this, we walk in newness of life, and all the parts of it: and by it, we may be assured in our prayers to be heard: against fearful sins to be preserved; to have the rage of our strong lusts weakened: and to have grace against them, although not always to prevail (which were not expedient for us) yet at least, to be in combat with them, which is ever a good testimony of our safety: for thereby, we prove that we be of the militant Church of Christ. Yea and to go further; by this, if we live by it, we have deliverance from many sharp and bitter afflictions, and bear those which we must go under, more meekly and patiently, because it maketh us depend on God's promises, and not to tie or stint him to any set time, any manner of deliverance, or any measure of affliction. And by it we walk in our callings more cheerfully, and with less toil and vexation, then they that have all shifts, and cunning sleights and devices to gain by: I say that which is incredible to the worldlings, politics, and hypocrites (but that is a heavy judgment of God, that though they be told the truth, yet they shall not believe it.)

For when we are persuaded, that our callings are approved of God, and profitable to men, by maintaining the state of Church, commonwealth, or any family; and that they are those, in which God will be served of us: then we take them in hand, not like drudges and droyles, who do their work for fear of the whip, nor like hirelings, who work only for wages, and so they must starve, if they did not work: but we consider, we serve the Lord, who is a bountiful paymaster, and hath promised a large blessing unto us: and because we do God's work and business; therefore we are assured that he will assist and further us therein, that both we may go about it more willingly, and that it may the better go forward: And therefore we disburden ourselves of much needless and troublesome care and thought taking (seeing he hath said, Cast your care on me, for I will care for you.) Neither do we make reckoning of our commodity what it shall be, before God do show us; but when we have served God's providence by lawful labor and travail, and used the means, we commit the success to him: and the fruit of our pain, we receive with thankfulness (whatsoever it be) and that we take for our daily bread. And if we be crossed in the good things which we go about (as every calling and travail since sin came into the world, hath affliction and sorrow adjoined to it) we do here, by faith, consider, that this is by the providence and good pleasure of God, who sometime crosseth our good and lawful attempts, least we should be glued too fast to these earthly things: and we remembering, that God loveth us dearly, and that of love he chastiseth us, so as they, and all other our miseries, shall in the end turn to our good, and therefore we rest and uphold ourselves in our estate with contentation. And this may be understood of all other earthly dealings and actions, which are lawful, and for the which we have warrant in the word of God: assuring ourselves, that whiles we see God ever going before us in them (as we should more look to it, that we find it so, then to our greatest profits and weightiest dealings) this faith shall uphold us in

the quietest estate and most sweet peace: such as all the carnal wisdom of man shall never find nor enjoy. For to speak, as the truth is, what a life do the unbelievers of the world lead, who will not learn what this life of faith meaneth? What sin do they commit in all kinds of their dealings, to the end they may bring that to pass which they would have? For in God they have no hope (for if they had, they would be counseled and commanded by him.) And although this do not appear and break out, by and by, to the sight of such as are ignorant like themselves; yet I would have them answer me to this: From whence is it, that they are often arraigned and forced to cry out fearfully; they are damned, and there is no mercy for them from God; they have done against their consciences, and what shall they do? &c. From whence come these speeches and complaints, I say? Do they not prove, that they sinned against their knowledge dangerously, though they would not see it then? And that God will be revenged upon their wickedness, though for a while they bear all out boldly, as Saul did? Therefore be we well assured, that the sin of such lieth at their door: and one time or other it will find them out. For besides their necessary affairs and business, they run into many needless and superfluous dealings, which must needs fill their heads with cares, and their hearts with sorrow: And in their lawful labors, they are so far from depending upon God for success, that they are ever fearing deadly, least they should be crossed, and inordinately set on hope that they shall prosper and gain: in both which, when they be disappointed, how like to mad men are they? Never contented with their state and condition. In which cases, how can it otherwise be, but that they be tossed, as the chaff with the wind? And never quiet nor cheerful, but when they have what they would: whereas if they did by faith build on God's promises, they should not need to be vexed, as they are, with such distractions, nor to spend their precious time as they do in worldly cares: For they should find better success and more blessing with less care and toiling of themselves, if they

would rest on God and put their confidence in him, and they should with free hearts and more quiet minds, have also more time to look after the heavenly life.

## **CHAP. 18.**

Of certain reasons, persuading to the practice of a godly life: which is the fourth general part of this treatise.

Thus I have after a sort declared what the Christians, and the believers life is, and in what duties it consisteth: and have disclosed in some sort, the sins, which instead of this godliness do possess men: The whole I confess hath been large and long: but therefore it must be considered, that the Christian life is in a manner all the substance of religion, and that which must give light and lend help to us in all things while we live: and therefore so great a matter containing all duties of all persons with the right manner of performing them, could not with any plainness and profit to the most, that shall read it (in my judgment) have been set down more briefly. Only this is here to be looked unto: that he may clearly and soundly know, what is good, and what is amiss in some particular manner, and be the better able to govern himself by that knowledge every day, as he shall have occasion, which as I said, shall further be declared in place most expedient: And to make this sum of a Christian life, his glass (as it is here, and by other writers set down, according to the word of God) whensoever he shall repair unto it, to see himself therein: Now hear some reasons, why the believer should lead his life thus.

And first I will begin with that, which deserveth the first place, and of right, ought to prevail with us: that seeing this Christian course doth so highly honor God, it ought without all exception, to be sought out

and attained of us: And how highly God is glorified in it, everyone may see, when even sinful and contemptible persons, who much dishonored him by their bad conversation, yet after being reformed, are made fit to glorify him? And if this be in their new birth, and regeneration at their first coming to God, how much more (think we) shall it be in their life afterward? A miserable caitiff to be made a Kings son, is admirable: but behold, here is more: for in Christianity, we find, that he which was the bondman of the devil, and of the family of hell, is advanced to the honor of the son of God, and made heir and inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. And if this be honor to Princes, that they can give great gifts, what is the Lord's honor, in and by them, whom he endueth with other gifts, then all princes have to give?

It was a great part of Solomon his royalty, that he gave silver, as stones; and goodly Cedars, as the wild fig trees: the Lord giveth graces and possessions, that neither silver nor gold can purchase: and a habitation that neither Cedars nor any Almond trees can make resemblance of. It is a great honor to God, that he hath made and fashioned man so excellent a creature of slime: but it is a greater honor, that he hath of a rude, unbridled and unclean devil, made a well ordered, sober, and meek Christian: yea a sanctified person; as the Scripture calleth him: for by his holy spirit through the work of the Gospel, he hath made of an extortioner, and oppressor, a liberal and bountiful giver, as Zacchaeus: of an adulteress, a penitent woman, reclaimed from the course of unclean life, as the woman in Luk. 7:47, and of a persecutor, a preacher: yea himself a persecuted man, even Paul the Apostle. And how doth such a change (think we) when it is seen of men, and the report of it heard among such as knew them before, cause them to say: The Lord hath done great things? And such grace doth God give, to them (I mean) that fear him, that he causeth by their light which shineth among men, even

their very enemy; to be at one with them: yea to speak well of them, and to glorify their father which is in heaven. And yet their beauty is (to speak as the truth is) chiefly within, and not seen with eye.

As all was not heard of Solomon a far off, which was to be seen at home: and yet not all seen, that might be known to be in him. The faithfulness, innocence, and rare continence of Joseph, with other graces which were in him, when they brought him into such favor, credit and admiration amongst men, how (think we) was God honored, who was the giver of them? Thus doth God honor them, that honor him, that he may be all in all, and by them showed, to be most honorable. And to speak of our own time, wherein we live, notwithstanding it afford not so many examples of so excellent gifts and graces of holy life (though in learning and knowledge few have gone beyond it) as so long liberty under the Gospel might justly challenge (which sin (I pray God) be not laid to our charge, but speedily repented of:) so yet we will not be ashamed to affirm, to the great praise of God, that both many gracious and godly people, since the reign of our most noble Prince, have been already gathered to their fathers, who in the days of their flesh, did honor God highly; and many remain (God be blessed) amongst us, who have, and do, and to their end shall (we doubt not) to the great comfort of many weak ones, commend the power of the Gospel preached amongst us, and cause that unfeigned thanks be given to God by many for them. And that both of the ministry (though nothing be more ridiculous to the Papists our adversaries) the Lord hath raised up many, who both preach sincerely, and diligently, and walk warily and worthy the Lord, Col. 1:10, and unoffensively seeking to please him in all things: and of the people, he hath drawn not a few, who do beautify their profession, and carry themselves unrebukable, among them who can judge aright, and are free from reproachful and dangerous evils. In such (as I have said) is the Lord made admirable: As it is written: In

Zion (his Church) shall God be praised: and why? Because for them he hath done great things.

The Lord maketh the weak strong, the ignorant prudent, and such as sat in darkness to see great light: holy and glorious is his name: Yea further the Lord teacheth his beloved ones in their prosperity, to count themselves but strangers in this world: he causeth the things of greatest price, to be little set by of them in comparison of his treasures, which are not seen: This honor have many of his Saints. The Lord giveth strength in tribulation above hope, and maketh anguish and sorrow to become comforts: false accusations, and contumelious reports, to be crowns to their heads and chains of gold to their necks which bear them. And to be short, he teacheth his, to suck sweetness out of sourness, and to make good use of all estates: and they are able to do all things through him that maketh them able; yea persecution itself he maketh tolerable, and joyful; and (when our weakness can see so far) the greatest advancement.

If these gifts of God with other such, do not greatly honor the Lord in the congregation of the righteous, and if they which enjoy them, being gracious and of high estimation, do not most highly commend the giver, which is God, where will men say, that God is honored at all? And so doth the Apostle require, that it should be with God's people: Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you as of evil doers, may glorify your father which is in heaven. And yet I have said nothing of their peace of conscience, which Solomon saith, is as continual banqueting to them: Saint Paul saith, it passeth all understanding: even in this one thing, which the ungodly (because they have not) they therefore know not (for the stranger is not partaker of the children's joy) know not (I mean) as it is felt and known of them which have it: In this one thing (I say) doth God get himself great glory: For they believing in their hearts, they



cannot choose but utter with their mouths, their deliverances, and the wonderful things that he hath done for them. And though they be for the most part contemptible in the world, yet is the meanest of them more happy, then the greatest of the world.

And if these things be well weighed, which have been said of this matter, it shall not be marveled at, that the Prophet thus speaketh in the Psalm: Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God! Yea glorious indeed, as we here enjoy them (though we have but a small part of our glory in this life) and so glorious, that if they could be seen with eye, they would so inflame men with the beauty of them, that they would force them to set all their love upon them. And thus by the graces, which are in the life of God's servants, and which are not to be found in other men, it may be seen, how God is honored of them; the contrary whereof, is done most apparently by the ungodly, as much as lieth in them. Therefore to conclude this first reason, except we can like to see God's name ill spoken of, his Gospel lightly accounted of, and his person dishonored, and that by ourselves (the recompense whereof cannot be borne nor abidden of us) let us not only come out from the unclean conversation of the unbelievers, but let us so lay hold on eternal life, that we press hard unto the mark, for the price that is set before us, and let the words of the wise be as goads to prick us forward, out of our slothfulness; and as nails to fasten us jointly and closely to Christ our head without hypocrisy, that we faint not neither fall away, but grow up unto the perfect age of Christians: that so we may give good testimony that God is truly honored of us, when our conversation shall be such, as his word layeth forth to us.

Another reason, why men should with full resolution address themselves to pass the time of their dwelling here in reverence and fear, is; because it is the only estate wherein they can prosper, and be

in safety: and when they are stripped of this heavenly robe, they are naked and exposed to infinite falls, shameful reproaches, and dangers, out of the which they shall find it no easy matter to deliver, and free themselves again. For this, consider what Solomon saith: When wisdom once entereth into thy heart, and knowledge delighteth thy soul, then shall understanding keep thee, and counsel shall preserve thee, from every evil way, and from the strange woman, and from those which leave the way of righteousness, to walk in the ways of darkness. When a man setteth himself to seek the Lord, and is willingly weaned from unlawful liberties, and hath made it his pastime to be well occupied, he shall not fear the accusations of his adversaries; for he hath made innocence his defense: neither shall he fall justly into the reproach that other do. For why? He hath settled himself against it: when thousands shall fall on every side, yet shall he stand, and not be removed: Yea the longer he is acquainted with this estate, the better he shall like it (howsoever to the worldly man it be most irksome and unsavory) and be much grieved, when through natural corruption and untowardness, he shall feel and perceive himself to be any whit weakened or cooled.

And how much such an estate is to be desired (as they can best tell which have any time enjoyed it, though such as know it not, find no want of it) it shall better appear hereafter in place more convenient, when I shall speak of the privileges of true Christians: yea and though he be drawn by his calling and necessary occasions, to affairs and dealings in the world, where no provocations to break off this course shall be wanting; and be occupied amongst men of all sorts, which shall be a strong cord to draw him after them: yet shall he be the more estranged from them, and loathe them, by as much as they are differing from that uprightness, which he hath purposed to walk in. And if he be unsettled or broken off at any time, yet shall he never think himself well, nor where he should be: but as the bird which is

wandering from her nest, and as a stranger heavy in heart from his own country, until he return to his place again.

And if any shall think this little, and of small account, which I have spoken, and among the rest, a man to live unrebukable in the midst of a froward and filthy generation (for I reserve to a further place, as I have said, to set down the manifold prerogatives that accompany such a life) let such compare it with the lives of those, which count it overmuch strictness to look carefully to their ways, and they shall find it by infinite degrees worthy to be wished and preferred: for what is there in the lives of such men, as have but this world in possession, to draw one to be in love with it, who looketh for a better? I will not stick to go further: that not only common professors of the Gospel (who yet lie dead in their sin ) may be constrained to commend and reverence them that have attained to it, as knowing how infinitely they be blessed above themselves: but even such also, as have received some likelihood of grace from God, yet slenderly going about to nourish the same, shall see many outstrayings, and offenses in their lives, which the other shall be discharged of.

For it is not enough that we purpose no wickedness, nor evil, but we must be strongly armed always with full purpose against it; especially that, whereto we be most prone, and wherein we have had by woeful trials, experience of our weakness. For while we do commit none, yet we make a way for it to enter into us a fresh, while we become secure, and improvident. This which I say, is manifestly to be seen in Peter, whom no man will judge so uncharitably of, that he came into the hall of the high Priest with any mind or purpose to deny his master: yet his sleight regarding of his masters so weighty admonition and watchword a little before, that is (Satan hath desired to sift you:) and that rashness of his, neither casting with himself, what danger might rise by occasion of the place and persons there (as Christian wisdom

would have moved him) neither weighing his own weakness, how easily he might be snared, having no commandment to be there: into what lamentable woe and bitter anguish did it bring him, by his fearful denying and swearing that he knew him not?

And can we, in charity, judge any less of the old Prophet that dwelt in Bethel, when he hearing of the man of God that came from Judah, to cry out against the Idolatrous Altar of Jeroboam, did courteously invite him to his house, as he saw his duty did require: but being answered, that he was commanded to eat no bread in that place: at that word he began to stomach it, that he being a Prophet of God, should not be believed, and did hastily reply upon him again, saying, that an Angel was sent to him, who commanded him to bring him into his house to eat: But the Scripture showeth us that he lied. And the like example is that of Judah the Patriarch, who went out in the morning to his sheepshearers, thinking of no such matter as fell out by the way; but meeting with a woman in harlots apparel, having not strongly armed himself against all sin, agreed and lay with her.

By all which it appeareth, that when men fear not their frailty, and arm not themselves against the same, they come home men less godly, then they went out: and for that they will take no warning from the Lord of the slippery paths that they walk in here in the world, therefore they cast themselves into fearful danger. And what is more plainly proved, then this by daily experience; that as God directeth us, when we commit ourselves to him; so when we willingly betake ourselves from his government, we run headlong into many and dangerous evils?

And yet when I consider the course of men's lives (and those none of the worst) how eagerly and greedily everyone, for the most part, is given and set about his worldly business and commodity, having

little thought of heavenly rules, in the meanwhile, to moderate him therein: this walking with God shall be thought so needless a companion for them, yea and unwelcome, that they would willingly have their earthly troubles increased, rather than that ye should fasten upon them such a burthensome yoke of commandments, as this is, to walk armed against evil. For if ye will force their thoughts with delectation to be taken up in fearing, and avoiding sin, and in laboring still to be better, this strict chaining of them, is a taking away of their whole comfort: for it is death to them, to go about to bridle their thoughts, and unruly desires: so that ye may persuade them to anything, save that which should be in them: and therefore is there so small showing forth of the light of the Gospel in men's lives. Yet do I nothing doubt, but where men of God do faithfully (in the pity they have of their brethren's miseries) show them the way to this, by doctrine, and living, that some shall grow by little and little to a liking of it. But oh happy they, who have chosen this way of God's testimonies to walk in; for their souls shall be bound up in the bundle of life, and they shall flourish as the plants, and grow as the Lily: and fasten their roots as the trees of Lebanon. Their branches shall spread: and their beauty shall be as the Olive tree, and their smell as Lebanon. And thus much of the second reason.

And what shall we say further? For no exercise of religion, nor godly means of the best sort can do them any good, who will not resolve themselves to come to this faithful practice of true religion and obedience to God his commandments: nothing shall be found more true than this, if we will suffer it to come under trial. For to begin with the Scripture: What did all the privileges of the stiff-necked Jews profit them, the law, circumcision, the covenant, and sacrifices? There were no greater prerogatives to any people or nation under the sun: And they also did in the outward practice of religion, join with the best of their brethren, both in keeping the appointed days, and

places in the worshipping of God, and also in being ready to offer their extraordinary services to him, and that voluntarily: yet what saith the Scripture from their first coming out of Egypt both in the wilderness and afterward? In many of them God had no delight, but slew them: Many thousands of them at sundry times perished, for their false heartedness, that when they had been delivered out of their dangers, they did not cleave fast unto the Lord, as in their afflictions, and anguishes they promised to do; but started aside like a broken bow.

And therefore, how doth the Lord take up this complaint against them, Oh that there were an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always? And in the Psalm: When he slew them, they sought him, yea they turned and sought God early: they remembered that God was their strength, and the most high God their redeemer: but they flattered him with their mouth, and dissembled with their tongue: for their heart was not upright with him, neither were they faithful with him in his covenant. And after that he saith of other generations: Oh Ephraim! How shall I entreat thee? Oh Judah! What shall I do unto thee, which I have not done? And again: Oh that my people had hearkened unto me! And that Israel had walked in my ways! I would soon have humbled their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.

Thus we see because they did not seek him daily, in the uprightness of their hearts, all the helps of religion did them no good, brought them no wisdom, experience nor comfort: all which, on the contrary, God's faithful servants enjoy. For David the man of God uttereth this sweet speech, and the like through the book of Psalms: Thou hast made me (O Lord) more wise then my teachers: then mine elders, and men of experience, because I have kept thy commandments: before I knew thee I went astray, but since, I have brought my feet

into the way of thy testimonies. The religious women, of whom we read in the Gospel, after that they saw the power of the Scriptures, and had their hearts humbled and meekened by the wisdom of them, how did they grow in holy affections, and Christian duties, painfully laboring to attain more knowledge by hearing Jesus his sermons from day today?

For when the word is received into a good and honest heart, both it and all other holy exercises with it, become profitable to singular uses. But where men propound not this, with themselves, to be cast into the mold of holy doctrine, and to be fashioned after it in their lives, it is far otherwise. For to say nothing of them who from the beginning of the week to the latter end, ask not after God (so little savor they find in the Scriptures, or sweetness in him) yet this is worthy our consideration: that there are thousands which come to Church and hear prayers and sermons, who for all this, are never the better to themselves; and the most of them do more hurt to others by their offensive life, nothing fashioning themselves after the doctrine of faith and amendment. Of whose lamentable condition, what other cause can be showed but this, that their hearts are hardened with the deceitfulness of sin; so that they walk afterwards, in their old ways still: and that they see no such beauty in the truth, which shineth amongst them that they will be subject to it: though Christ reigneth only by the power thereof in the hearts of his? John. 18:37. For seeing they have not believed and revered that which they saw and knew, the Lord hath kept back his grace from them, which he did not owe them, and so given them into Satan's hands to make them bondmen in evil at his pleasure. The which people being not renewed and changed in their minds, and so brought to a loving and delighting in good things, their lip-labor in their serving of God, and time which they give to it, cometh to nothing; neither commendeth

them any whit to him; neither leaveth any fruit thereof to themselves.

And yet we must know, that there are others of the same company, at the same time, and using the same means with much blessing of God upon their lives, who also declare, as I have said, that they have effectually received into their hearts the heavenly doctrine, which hath sounded amongst them: for why? They have set themselves to seek the Lord. By whose gain in godliness the greater it is (as there is no comparison betwixt all the pleasures of the world and it) so much we may see the other to have lost. And is it not lamentable to see, that any should take such a course? That they should bestow all their prayers, confession of sins, and hearing of sermons in vain? I might more rightly say, to their just condemnation in the day of the Lord: Men will not be made fools in anything saving in this: though foolishness in all other things is not to be compared with this.

What man is there to be found, who being deeply in debt and greatly behind hand, when he hath sown his field, will be contented to reap no fruit of it, or being in suit of law, will lend his money to his adversary to hold plea against him? But such men are amongst us (I say not) who take much pain to come to eternal life, and yet are well enough content to go without it (For being lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, they know that they cannot have it:) but as though the devil were not strong enough to accuse, and enchant them, they do negligently, yea willingly offer him advantage by keeping in a bad course (though they know how to come out of it) or grow worse and worse to their speedy confusion.

Or who is it, which being warned out of his house, yea and that in earnest manner, will yet delay, and neglect to seek and provide for himself, till he be cast into the street?



But concerning the matter which I deal in, if men's profane lives and slothfulness, driving off their repentance from day today, were but perpetual beggary, and going about all the days of their lives from door to door, I would have said nothing (though it were pitiful to see any cast themselves into such misery:) but they sell themselves bondmen to hell without recovery, and are as stubble before the Lord's wrath, which is a fire to burn them, and therefore it requireth more earnest calling upon. The Lord commended the unjust steward, not for his particular act, but because he had done wisely: who, when he had warning to be put out of his stewardship, he provided elsewhere to be received. But such warning will not prevail, nor such wisdom fasten upon these men, until, as they have lived in pleasure and liberty of the flesh, they die in sorrow and utter bondage, and so receiving a just recompense of their lives, they find, though too late, how true this is, which I say.

And if this be the estate of many, who yet do commonly resort to hear God's word, who will read at home, yea and have prayers in their houses, (for this I am sure many of our country do; whose case yet, because I know, I do heartily bewail, for that the Christian life is not for all this, aimed at, almost, in many of their actions) good Lord, what shall the estate of others be, who come as far behind them, as they do behind the best of God's servants? Even those others (I say) who being the greatest part of the people, are not troubled with any thought of God or devil, heaven or hell, throughout the week? But having their heads filled, and their time continually taken up in matters of the world, and in hearing and telling news and tales (yet many of them nothing concerning themselves) and leaving their callings, do busy themselves with other men's matters needlessly, and spend many days in the week in idleness, prating, vain games, and pastimes, and cannot find one hour in it to bethink themselves of any account giving to their heavenly Lord and master (though to

that very end they are set here) that once yet at last they might begin to return unto him.

But I have tarried longer about this matter then I meant: Therefore leaving them who trouble not themselves greatly with godly exercises, I will return to such, who are in profession, and in show far before them; and yet because they do not heartily and faithfully seek to be bettered (I mean) to be settled in a Christian life, do therefore reap no good by the means which they use. But some perhaps may think some hardness in this speech, and may object thus: do we not therefore repair to the word and use good means, to the end we may become faithful and upright, and get good by them? And have not they, who have most profited in godliness attained unto it hereby? Why then do ye affirm (they say) and that to the discouragement of many, that if our hearts be not reformed, the means do us no good?

I answer, that it is far from my meaning to raise the least discouragement to any; in whom, if I knew but the smallest desire to be reconciled to God, I would be most ready to cherish and to strengthen the same: and he that exerciseth himself in reading, hearing, prayer, God persuade him tenfold more, if he desire to profit thereby: neither do I doubt, but that such shall see in time to their great comfort, that it is not in vain to wait patiently on the Lord, for a blessing upon his own ordinance. But this I say, when men either think, that they do as much as they need, while they join themselves to the exercises of religion, and rest contented therein, and see not that they are enemies to God, under his curse, and without faith, and therefore without God in the world, and see not their wants and emptiness of grace, how they are fraught with many sins uncontrolled, and strong rebellions not restrained; let not such look to glory in their means using: their rejoicing is not good, their estate is woeful, and that in no mean degree. They may be said unto, as they

of Laodicea were in the Revelation by the holy Ghost: Thou sayest thou art rich and needest nothing, and knowest not, that thou art miserable and blind, and poor, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, and eye-salve?

And marvel not, that I have said, that such, whose hearts are not purged by faith, receive no profit by the exercises of religion, as might further be showed by many more examples of Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida: For even the dear children of God, when they wax wanton against the Lord, and grow slothful in performing their duties to God, or do them in a slighter manner, then they sometime had done: as he punisheth their transgressions other ways; so doth he this one way chastise them, that they shall feel no sweetness, nor find no savor in the best things they shall do, or exercises of religion which they shall go about.

And this it is, that we hear many, even good people complain of, that they cannot profit at a Sermon, their hearts are roving elsewhere all the time (almost) of prayer; reading is irksome to them, and they withdraw themselves even from good company: All which with meditating about their estate, were wont to be the things wherein they took greatest delight and comfort: what is the cause (think we) that they are now become so contrarily minded? Surely this; they have waxen weary of their reverent attending upon God (as all good things doth the flesh soon turn into weariness) and begin after the manner of men, with whom they live, to seek their unlawful liberty some way, not being circumspect enough about y e keeping of the best things, in price and estimation: and when the Lord seeth this, he taketh from them the privileges which they enjoyed before; he dimmeth the light of their minds, that they see not so clearly; and shutteth up their hearts, that they delight not in the matters which were wont to be of greatest account and reckoning with them.

With what joy (may it be thought) did David perform the duties of religion after his heinous sin in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah? When it is clear that he slept in it (as it were) all the time before Nathan the Prophet was sent to awake him, and bring him to repentance. Or what comfort (is it to be thought) had Jonah in thinking of his happiness, or upon any part of the true worship of God, which yet had usually been his whole delight, after he fled away from the presence of the Lord? Who laboring to forget his sin, (as may be gathered by his hasty paying the hire of the Ship-master beforehand, that he might be sure to be carried away from the fulfilling of the Lord's commandment) such a palpable blockishness was cast upon him, that he laid himself down to sleep in most great danger, in which the Heathen mariners fell to prayer, and came to him to awake him: and after, being urged to examine himself by them, did not very hastily come to the confessing of it.

To omit others, the daily experience that God's children have of their many complaining's, unquietness's, discomforts, and such like tediousness (which need not to press them, but for the conscience and remembrance of some treachery against God, and too unkind and undutiful dealing with him) do sufficiently prove, that God taketh away even the heart and life (as I may say) of prayer, knowledge, and other means of religion, and leaveth his children without comfort in the use of them, when they wax wanton against his majesty, and keep not holy compass, as they have experience, that both they may and have done, and as he in his word hath taught them to do. By all which it may appear, that much more they who worship him with unclean hearts never washed nor purged, cannot receive into them the sweet and wholesome liquor of his grace, by what outward exercise soever they present themselves before him. Thus much of the reasons, why the believer should labor with all diligence to practice this godly life.

## CHAP. 19.

Of answers to certain objections brought against the necessity of practicing this godly life.

And now that I have added these reasons to the description of the Christian, which believeth in God, I would cease to say anymore of this matter, if I did think, that men, who have received the Gospel among them, were persuaded and resolved to yield to this doctrine, and to cast away all clogs and cloaks of shame, fear, and other lets, and heartily go about to practice the same willingly, when they have heard it: But I know there are few such. For they who do thus, do not only themselves walk after the rule which I have set down, aiming thereat, as at a mark, but also desire that many other were as they be.

But the multitude of such, as have either no faith, nor grace, but only hear our doctrine, who yet profess that they look for salvation by Christ, do think, that this which I have drawn out of God's word, and set down for their edifying, is more then they need to look after, or trouble themselves with: which kind of persons seeing they swarm everywhere, I do oft say and profess, that I oppose myself throughout this my book against that their damnable opinion and practice, and do bend the force of Scripture and sound reason against them. For while these thoughts prevail with them and possess them, they do but reason against their own benefit, comfort and happiness: yea, and even many of those, who have further tasted of the Gospel, of whom it becometh us to hope well; yet are for the most part, ignorant of the course, which I have described, and content themselves with this, that they have some good affections at sometimes and flitting desires to live honestly.

And therefore, I would meet with some of the objections, which they allege, why they should be no further dealt withal, but suffered to go on as they do in a fruitless, dead and dull manner. Some of these say, they hope their desire is to please God, although they cannot do it as some do: and namely, such as endeavor to follow this doctrine which in this book I propound. For my part, I do not marvel, that they should as it were shrink and hold back from such a course, though they would seem religious, as having not yet seen how great encouragement God hath given them to walk in it; neither what great cause they have to lay hold of such encouragements, having many things to hinder them. These persons therefore, so many of them as will be teachable, and not resist the truth willfully, I will answer; and give them some worthy examples of such as have gone before them herein: that they may not think, they are pressed too far, and to do more than they need (if possibly they may see their error, and so find greater liberty and delight in well doing.) The which being done, they shall see what difference is betwixt the estate they are in, and that which they are stirred up and called unto.

And that which hath persuaded and moved me to this, is, (as I partly said in the first entrance) for that I see many of good hope, and some not without a right and true beginning in this holy course, to be kept at a stay, or driven back, and seem not to know what the Christian life is, nor in many years to come thus far, as to be persuaded how pleasant and profitable it is, and by how many degrees to be preferred without all comparison, before any other course. For many of the forwarder sort, though they would not willingly forsake it, yet complain, that they find much tedious heaviness, strong discouragements, and many relapses which breed doubtfulness and fear. Some which are weaker, are under deadly dumps, strange questionings, whether they shall go forward or no, and such small comfort they find in their profession, that they declare plainly, that

they are far from the staidness which I speak of: and this not at the first only, but many years after they have liked well of the Gospel.

Divers others account the Christian life, mopish, solitary, and such an estate, the which they hold great wisdom to avoid; that I say nothing of the Atheists, whom I vouchsafe no answer. Now therefore except these can be otherwise persuaded, that the godly life is neither irksome in itself, nor full of deadly discouragements, except, to the flesh, whereto they are not debtors, neither without great comfort; yea even in tribulation (through hope which deceiveth not) but such an estate, as hath caused many for the delight they have found in it, to refuse all other, which could not stand with it: except (I say) they can be thus persuaded, what likelihood is there, that they shall ever be brought to be acquainted with it?

For answer to all, let such understand and know, that this Christian life is not to be pieced up with some good actions in the which we may rest, neither consisteth of good intents, and in chopping and changing our course from good to evil, and contrarily: but it is the same which I have said, even the keeping of our hearts sincere and upright, and unfeignedly bent to walk with the Lord after all his commandments throughout our whole course, according to our knowledge: and that in such wise, and with such delight, that he who hath experience of it, would not change it for any other: for why? It yieldeth an hundredth fold for one in all carnal liberties or delights, which we forsake.

And that it must be thus with the people of God, and may possibly be also, that of the Prophet doth plainly declare, that the man which may rejoice and speak of his estate with comfort indeed, is he which doth not by fits and at some odd times, lift up his heart to God: but who doth so love his law, that he meditateth in the same all the day

long, as he himself did, meaning this, that his thoughts should lead him to God from time to time; and when they are occupied about evil, or ranging in the world unprofitable and amiss, that he should by and by without dallying, or delay, call them back again. And what (think we) doth he mean in another place, when not speaking particularly of himself, but generally of all which are the Lord's, he saith? The blessed man doth exercise himself day and night in this, that he may please God (as his word directeth him) and have peace thereby with him, and so may testify, that God is his treasure, because his heart and love is set upon his commandments. He doth not mean that we, who will be happy, must be occupied in prayer, hearing or reading only both day and night; neither yet doth he mean, that in some pang, or when we think good, we should be occupied thus, and well affected, and have our lives well framed: but this he meaneth, that he, who is godly and happy indeed, endeavoreth to this, that his mind may delight in, and be possessed of good matters, or rightly using lawful: or carefully resisting those which are sinful.

And it is the same, which the Apostle meant when he said, our conversation is in heaven, though we are on earth: teaching therein himself and all other Christians, that their whole course (so far as man's frailty would permit) (and how far it may permit, let this treatise out of God's word testify) ought to be a settled and constant carrying of themselves (as I said before) throughout their lives in such sort, as they might show and approve themselves to be men of God. If we desire to see examples of these things, the Scripture setteth out many unto us: and namely the life of our father Enoch, that in his time, which soon after the creation of the world was corrupted, he did yet walk with the Lord: as if it should say, he did so live in the world amongst men, that he had yet, through his life, a heavenly and most happy communion with God.



Abraham, though he be not exempted from infirmities, yet from the first time of his calling unto his death, what a rare pattern did he set before the eyes of men in his example, of a man consecrated to God, and not earthly minded? For wheresoever he came, he set up an altar unto the Lord: declaring thereby, that no change of place, time, or company, could withhold him from following the Lord, but as the first left country and kindred at his commandment, when he knew not as yet whither he should go, or what should become of him: So when he had leisure after to return, yet he refused; because he sought a better country, namely, heavenly, witnessing still more and more, that his obedience was sound and faithful, by looking to another inheritance, until an hundred years were fully complete in an holy course.

And of Job, how clearly doth the holy Ghost witness this, whereof I speak? In so much, that he not only withdrew himself, and departed from the corrupt examples of the people of his time, but also had a particular regard of the actions of his life, both towards God and men: For proof whereof, his strong faith with patience, prayers and sacrifices do testify the one: his just dealing with all men, and mercifulness to the poor, with rare wisdom in governing his own family and in carrying himself toward all, do show most clearly the other: All which were not at times, but usually and ordinarily performed, and through his course of life looked unto and continued.

And yet another thing I must needs add (as I am persuaded) very admirable: that he did use to acquaint himself in the midst of his prosperity with the looking for a change, and did learn in his greatest abundance to want: and being in so high a place, yet he was not puffed up; because he considered how fleeting and momentary all things were: and that his prosperity was lent him only for a short time, and was not a patrimony or inheritance to him forever: So that

when he was afterward tried with loss of all (which was exceeding much) it might appear, that he was but little moved with it, because he had loved it but a little, when he did enjoy it: The which gracious man thus using the world, as hath been said, holding all so stranger-like, while he had it, and so willingly foregoing it, when God would require it, how could he do it, without a diligent looking to his ways, and the directing of the thoughts of his heart in a very particular manner, and that in and about worldly goods, in which case men think no bounds should be prescribed them.

As for Moses, although it was a rare grace, when he was of full and ripe years, to refuse to be maintained as the son of Pharaohs daughter, and to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; yet it is more marvelous, how in example he went before the rest, in the things which God required: and shining daily more and more, as the Sun till the noon tide; not weary of his service, as many are, but liking better of it, the longer experience he had of it: so that there was no good being elsewhere to him: and so accomplished eighty years in that righteous and holy course.

As for David's practice, besides the Lord's commendation of him, that he was a man after his own mind: so that we may see more particularly, how he passed his time, that one place of his Psalms doth clearly show, where he saith: This is the course of my life, after the which I frame myself, as the blessed of the Lord also do: with my whole heart I seek thee, O Lord, as thy word teacheth me: the which so far as I have received, I lay it up, and hide it in my heart, as treasure: and so far as I do not understand it, I desire to be further taught of thee: I use to speak of thy wondrous works, and of thy wisdom: I take more pleasure in thy testimonies, then in all manner of riches: and I daily meditate and muse thereon. By these, with many other such properties of a godly man mentioned in the same

Psalm, we may conclude without doubting, that a mind thus exercised was not void of a life full of answerable fruits: And three times a day he did use to resort to God ordinarily in prayer and thanksgiving, after a solemn manner, besides other occasions oft moving him: that save only in that one matter of Uriah the Hittite, we seldom read of a man more taken up of an heavenly heart, then he was.

I make mention of these holy servants of God, the more particularly setting down their course of living, their properties, and their whole estate, rather than some of their actions and holy works, to this end; That they, who love to have short work made of this matter, and content themselves with this, as a sufficient warrant of godliness, if they can reckon up some commendable works in their lives (whereas the baddest have somewhat in them that is commendable) may not judge so of a godly life, deceiving themselves: but may make it their whole conversation to be godly, not favoring themselves in any known sins, or actions doubted of to be sins, but sifting themselves daily, to search and find them out: neither withholding themselves from new duties, which they have not been wont to practice, but teachable and ready to hear, whatsoever the Lord hath to require of them. And my meaning is, that after we have made an entrance into a godly life, we should not hold on by fits, now and then (as I said) and be off and on, as many are: but constantly go forward, as our years grow upon us, and carefully to endeavor, that in one thing as well as in another, we may please God in reverence, and in fear.

Neither is it my purpose in all this, to persuade, that believers must have some godliness (for that must be attained to, already; of all such as I direct my speech to) neither that they should rest in that which they have: but look upon such to follow them, who in the Scriptures are set before them, as the forwardest Christians, and holiest

examples: So that they acquainting themselves still with their own wants, weaknesses, and corruptions, which they bear about them, may daily gather strength against them, and prosper as the Lord's plants, in every part of their life to become fruitful.

So shall they know by experience what this meaneth, which I speak of, namely, to walk with God continually, and after a certain manner (although wandering on the earth, wrapped in with infirmities) to have their conversation in heaven with him. And so shall they more clearly and fully behold the benefit of Christ's death; that it was not only to save them from eternal death, and to bring them to everlasting life; but also to work the death of sin our most deadly enemy, and to mortify it, and to purchase for them a comfortable passage thither also, through the enjoining of many goodly blessings in this life, as pledges of the same, though it be otherwise but a vale of misery, to all such as find not this for their portion. For this is to be known, that as everyone excelleth another in the graces of the spirit, thereafter is his measure greater in the privileges of a Christian, more than others, and with more sound and continual comfort doth he pass his days, and free his life from reproachful and fearful evils. And the more that any godly man increaseth in goodness, and goeth beyond that estate, wherein he hath sometime been, in knowledge and in a high esteeming of it, and the right use of the same; the more shall his life be filled with matter of sound and pure rejoicing.

Therefore to conclude this matter: seeing the godly and Christian course of living is not a serving of God when we think good, but from time to time; nor a looking to some of our actions, when others are not regarded; nor an estate unpleasant to the spiritual man, whom the holy Ghost directeth, but easy, sweet, and comfortable; seeing also we have heard by many examples of godly men (otherwise not

without their infirmities anymore then we) that this life hath been practiced in all ages: I conclude, that the elect and beloved of the Lord shall yield to the embracing of it, and must take up the same, though it be a yoke to the corrupt lusts not yet subdued: and that such as see not cause to submit themselves to God's commandments one as well as another, but will take their liberty in some evil, after the desire of their hearts, cannot glory with any sound peace of a godly life.

And consequently, that the life of the common Protestant, which counteth it preciseness to be abridged of any liberty that he hath been wont to use, or yet liketh to enjoy (how unlawful or offensive soever it be) is nothing less than a godly and Christian life: for such a one will come to the light, that whatsoever is not as it ought to be, may be made known, and so removed. But he that will not be touched, nor suffer his actions to be censured, nor reprov'd, though he be far from this practice, but pleaseth himself in the things which he doth, is (without all question) fraught and filled with infinite evils, and a bondman to his own lusts, whatsoever opinion he hath of himself, and let such a one know, that his damnation sleepeth not. But many of these with whom I have to deal, such as go for good Christians, and who in sundry of their doings are of us well to be liked (though God judgeth the heart) many such (I say) do keep at a stay, or content themselves with this, that they do no great evil (although they do little good) because they see few live better, by whom they might take any great light to amend. To speak plainly, they think there are none in these days, who do follow the steps of the holy fathers, whose lives I commend: which kind of persons may be easily convinced, and I will say no more, then I needs must. The truth is, that the general state of those men, who embrace the Gospel, is much to be bewailed. For although they are infinitely the worse, by reason of the swarms of Atheists, Papists, Familists, and others, both

Heretics and Machivilians, which with their stinking breath do poison many thousand inhabitants, which dwell in the land amongst them: yet besides this, the abomination is great without respect of them; through ignorance, little reverence to the word, custom in evil, and sleight executing of sundry good laws among us: but this ought to be no offense to any. For who would look for any other then loathsome life in the greatest number, as it hath always been? Christ himself affirming, that his flock is but small, Luk. 12:32.

But notwithstanding this, in some places, and those many, throughout her Majesty's dominions, where the Gospel hath been soundly preached and painfully, especially in an ordinary ministry continued: such particular parts of this Realm will testify, that there have been, and are many, not of the Ministry only, but of the people also, who have been lights unto those which have known them, and lived amongst them, and whose names have sounded, and that most justly, a far off, where they themselves have never come: Myself have known many, and yet do (the Lord multiply the number of them, and the grace which he hath given them, a thousand fold, and be highly praised for them) with whom to have lived, and been conversant, hath been the next choice unto heaven itself, and to the communion of God's Saints there, which some of them do already enjoy.

Their names I spare for sundry causes; but such they were, whiles they here remained, and such they are, of whom I speak, who yet remain (though I know but few of those many (I hope) whom God hath beautified his Church withal) as may justly take away this offense from any, who should think that we have none which may be patterns and lights to others of this Christian, innocent, and fruitful life: yea rather, it may persuade them that there are many such, as by good and long experience can testify, that which is elsewhere written, that in serving God there is great reward, and that godliness

receiveth many blessings, as the fruits of God's promises, even in this life.

And they do not as many, that is, give over and faint, as though the Christian life grew wearisome and tedious to them; but the longer they have continued therein, so much the more settled and constant they have been in the same, increasing daily in faith, and other graces, and hold on their fellowship since they knew first the power of the Gospel: Yea many there are at this day (to God's glory be it spoken) who have so effectually tasted how good and sweet the Lord is, that they have been encouraged to add to the times, and to their travail in the service of God, as prayer, reading, for one hour in the week many, and for a little labor in looking to their ways, watching their hearts, and searching out their sins, much and oft: for the profit which they have found thereby.

And whereas they have sometime gone about these spiritual duties untowardly, whiles their minds (though renewed) were weakly seasoned with grace: yet after they have with much cheerfulness and delight gone about the same, when they have had more acquaintance with the Christian course. The remembering of the hours of holy assemblies by keeping holy day on the Lord's Sabbaths in the word and prayer, and other private hours of calling on God, and reading of his word, how pleasant and sweet is it unto them, before they come to it? And yet if they should rest in these, I would not think them worthy so great commendation, not adjoining therewith other duties to men. But when they have found such delight in the former worshipping of God, they have also walked more roundly and fruitfully in their particular callings, in their families and other companies, and their worldly matters (in which most men do highly offend God, and think they may deal in them as they think good) they carefully endeavor to be directed in them by such rules, as his word

teacheth them. And such as these are, God hath set amongst others, that they may learn of them, and be shadowed as it were, under the wings of their good example.

And this is the pattern of the life which God would have us to lead, from the which the whole world well-nigh are strangers, though little to their rejoicing; and principally they, who scornfully refuse all such instructions, as require more than they do, or be willing to practice. Indeed it must be granted, that these being few in respect of them, who set themselves to uphold the corrupt estate that the world hath ever lien in: they have not therefore many to commend their good examples, as the other have; but rather are ill spoken of, because they will not follow the same excess of riot that others do, 1. Pet. 4:4, and especially where they dwell: for the devil envieth their credit and good report. And yet the worst in their controversies and needs, when they are driven to trust some, will soonest choose them to be compromisers for them, as knowing them to be men of good and upright consciences, rather than others: as we read Saul did so account of David (when he spake according to sound reason) and made him swear to him, that he would be kind and friendly to his posterity after him, 1. Sam. 24:22. And such honor have the Lord's people.

And therefore to turn a little to these objectors, let them not think that our age affordeth none, which are fit to be examples to them; but let them rather be wise to discern them (at least, that which is pleasing to God in them) which is not hard to see, for those which are willing to understand, but easy to be found out of such as desire it. Let them reverence, and be in love with such as excel in piety and virtue; and with the precious things which are in such: let them aim at this also, that they may be like them, and not lie still in the darkness, to the which they are accustomed. And such of them, as



God hath blessed with some better liking of knowledge, let them love and frequent the company of such as desire neither to be idle, nor unprofitable, seeing he hath set such amongst them, to far more great and singular purposes, then they can by carnal eyes see or discern. Let them labor to see their own wants, cause them to make much of those who may help to supply them, and of whom they may learn to come by those graces, which they should without the help of such, never have attained unto.

And if they carry themselves in such humility, and reverent account making of their betters, in whom there is a greater measure of God's gifts, they shall be no longer led with their former doubts, whether any are before them in the Christian life, but they shall praise God highly for setting such lights and examples before their eyes, by whom they may be directed: and when they are so far enlightened, they shall soon alter their language, and speak with new tongues: as they in the Acts (chap. 2:13, compared with 2:37.) who in their profaneness, railed on the Apostles, and said, they were drunken with new wine, in the fore part of the day: but being converted by Peters Sermon, they had learned to come in humility to them with the reverend titles of men and brethren, asking counsel of them, whom they had so abused, rather than of any other; what they should do to be saved. And this for answer to the second objection.

## **CHAP. 20.**

The last objection against the godly life answered.

There is yet another objection, that I will answer, and it might be a great weakening of the holy courage of the servants of God, if they should not be well fenced against it. And this it is: Seeing we teach publicly the same, which I have before set down of the estate of the

godly, and profess without fear, that thus the people of God must walk, and we affirm that God's is not pleased with this dark and dead life, which is led by men's good intents, without any certain rule to guide them, much less with that which is contrary to godliness, diverse take great offense hereat, and arise up against us in this manner, saying: Ye go too far, and brag of that which is not in you: and again, remember how many have fallen, which were more like to have stood then you, as David, Peter, and others. It is therefore good (say they) for all men to profess no more than others do, that there may be no great wondering, when any great trespass shall be committed by them. To which kind of men, for the better settling and quieting of God's weak children, I answer.

By the grace of God, bragging is far off from us, as we also heartily desire it may be: neither do we go too far, his word being our warrant. But we are not afraid to utter that which we know; nay we dare not do otherwise, though it be against our selves, as much as others, if we shall set light by it at any time: neither fear we, that shameful falls, shall anything the sooner take hold of us, for speaking the truth boldly, but removed more far from us, whiles we are nothing more afraid, then to offend thereby. And if either our pride or boldness should break out so far, as that it should cause the Lord to chastise us, or that we should be so careless, and improvident over our selves, that Satan should again bewitch us with the deceitfulness of sin, we look for none other, but to bear our burden of an unquiet mind, and the reproach due to us thereby, and our punishment, which shall befall us, because of our offense: but though we should so be overtaken, yet shall we rise again: and though many of us should fall from our steadfastness; yet for all that, this is true, namely, that God will have the holy and Christian life, which I have set down, practiced of others: and howsoever we should be turned out of the way for a season, and whatsoever might become of us; yet he that is

able of stones to raise up children to fear him, will provide true worshippers of him, whatsoever become of us: and the truth of God remaineth, that such as will be worshippers of him, must depart from iniquity.

As for David, by the great wisdom and goodness of God, his fall was a glass to behold God's mercy in, not to embolden any to sin thereby: and that like trespassers who possibly might despair, should not cast away hope of forgiveness. The sin itself arose from the nourishing, and giving place secretly to his heart in such unlawful desires (as by his eyes were occasioned) such as in this treatise I labor to call men from; as appeareth by his own confession in the Psalm, where he saith: Against thee, O Lord, against thee have I done this evil: as if he should have said, though my offense be horrible before men, yet from hence it came, seeing I feared not before God secretly, whiles yet the offense came not forth openly. And this I say, that we may learn to beware of inward temptations, and outward occasions of sin, and boldly profess to do both.

And thus I having answered this doubt of David, that no wise body need to take hurt by it: yet because I know how some do draw such examples to liberty in sinning, and even this one example as much as any other, turning it against themselves, which they should take good by; I will add this one thing, which I would otherwise have omitted, seeing I have made mention of it before: That David did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and turned away from nothing, that he commanded him, all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. As therefore it was no usual thing with him, neither did he oft thus offend in cases so well-known unto him: so it is no cause why we should be discouraged from a sound course, for fear, least we should fall after the like manner, but watch in all things, that we may be the further from such fear.

Peter (to say somewhat of him) before Christ's ascension, howsoever he was faithful, and in many parts of his life commendable, yet had he no such great strength and growth in grace, that we ought to be content to be as he was: but rather look to be lights and good examples in all good works, least we should fall away dangerously, when such a one as he was, did deny his master. I know God can correct the dearest of his servants in as fearful a manner. But (blessed be his name) we know thus much of his mind, that he taketh no pleasure in their troubles, neither delighteth he in their sufferings, much less doth he take advantage of their infirmities.

He draweth them out of deep dangers, when they have plunged themselves into them. And if we provoke him not, there is no fear of reproachful evils to be sent upon us by him: and therefore, if we count it pleasure to please him, and to be watchful against the occasions of sin, this giveth us holy boldness and confidence, that we shall be kept from fearful falls, rather than to be afraid of them, by being too godly: Neither was Peter thus armed, when he so offended, but as we may easily see, therefore he fell, because he was naked and unarmed.

And so it is with all others in this case, that so dishonor God as he did. Now if he did fall, and we may also fall, whiles we are yet not without confidence in God, what is to be thought of our best actions, if we should do as many would have us, namely, to show and profess no more than others do; and so make common professors examples, to be rules for our lives: what should our lives then be, but a very dunghill fraught with unsavory filthiness, and not an offending of God lightly now and then? Neither let men say, they can live no otherwise then they have done, nor discontentedly say, we would have them take no delight in anything; but husband and wife must

sit and look heavily one upon another: neither may neighbors be merry together.

For such may understand, to the first point of their objection, where they say, they cannot leave the course, in the which they have lived (that is in small knowledge of God and his will; following the world with greater pleasure then the word of God: and having their other rejoicings in things here below, and using their labor but even as toil &c.) they may (I say) understand, that if they cannot change such courses, their own mouths shall be their accusers: for such cannot be in good state. For I urge no other change upon them, then they themselves shall be forced to confess to be required by God of them, and that for their best.

And being so, I would ask this of them, who is he, which having lived long in a cottage full of penury and wants, cannot frame himself to a more wealthy estate, if it befall him, and to enjoy greater abundance of all good things meet for this life, and that because he hath of long time been accustomed to a meaner and poorer condition? Is any so destitute of common reason, or so willful, that when his diet may be wholesome and sweet, his apparel cleanly and seemly, his habitation commodious, and well fenced against all annoyance of wind and weather, he will yet refuse all these being offered him, for a portion in poverty, where his wants cannot be supplied? And yet what comparison is there betwixt these things, and the high degree of felicity, which in the Christian course I propound, in respect of the deceivable, vain, and painful pleasure (for so I may most justly call it) which they enjoy, who follow their old custom, and lust of their ignorance?

Therefore they must needs confess, that their blindness is to be bewailed: also the hardness of their heart, and deep unbelief, which

holdeth them at this stay, that howsoever we can bring them tidings of a better; yet having been long bewitched with their darkness, and sin, as the people were with Simon Magus his sorceries, they cannot change their old course.

To the second part of their objection, where they with misliking, say, we would have them delight in nothing, that they have, as wife, children, goods, neighbors? If I would have them live after such rules as I prescribe them: I answer: that their whole conversation must be put off indeed, wherein they have lived after the manner of the world. That ought to be no strange thing to them, which is so common a truth in the Scriptures; even all that they hold of their own, both in heart and life, as far as can be, must be avoided: and therefore their lightness, rejoicing in evil, taking pleasure in the creatures more than in the creator, and the making of these things their chief delight: all these with corrupt merry-makings, must be pruned off from them, (even as we would pare off the under-boughs which suck up the sap and juice from the good vine branches:) which, if they were fit to see it, have troubled themselves and others, more then all their fond liberties have pleased them, and therefore both they and others should be the more glad of such change. And what account is to be made of such rejoicings with wife and other friends, which must be repented? But if it be according to knowledge, who forbiddeth it? When it is well known, that both the marriage and other fellowships, which true religion hath made amongst people, is of all other, sweetest and most comfortable. As for other, let them be broken off.

For what have they lost (to speak of the best) who do so, but that which may be spared as well, as the paring of their nails? If any will speak better of it, it is only he, whom God hath not taught to speak. Therefore to conclude, as these and such other objections are too

frivolous, to justle out a godly life from the practice of true Christians and believers: so when it shall be gone about, as I have taught and set down in this treatise, then they shall lead the life of faith, even the life which pleaseth God: and consequently, then they shall live happily in every estate and lawful calling whatsoever: For he walketh safe and sure who walketh uprightly. And he that doth otherwise, and perverteth his ways (as I have showed how, by going from the truth which he knoweth) God will find him out, and he shall meet with plagues and sorrow enough.

## **THE THIRD TREATISE,**

NAMELY, OF THE MEANS WHEREBY A GODLY LIFE IS HELPEN  
AND CONTINUED.

### **CHAP. 1.**

What the means are, and the kinds of them, and of the sum and order of this treatise.

I have set down a description of the life of the believer: by the which all, who desire to be acquainted with it, after they have obtained the gift of faith, may walk godly and safely through their pilgrimage, even so many as have at any time in truth began, and gone about the same. Now seeing this Christian life is upholden and continued by

means, and everyone which shall set upon it, will be desirous to know them, as he hath good cause, and how to use them aright, because the hindrances and discouragements from the same are many and great; I will therefore (as it is meet I should) show what I understand by the helps, and means: and which they are; also the kinds of them, their nature, and how they ought to be used, seeing that God hath promised, by the right and reverent use of them, and the same constantly continued, to give such grace, even to weak ones whereby they shall be able in truth as hard as it seemeth, to lead this godly life, and sensibly to discern, that they do so. For as it was not begun without means, so neither can it grow without them.

Now as this doth wonderfully declare the goodness and kindness of our God, in ordaining of them for our exceeding great benefit and comfort: so we must know, that it is required of us, and earnestly looked for at our hands, that we use them with such care and constancy, as that they may be most profitable unto us, that so we may find that fruit of them which God promiseth.

These means whereby God hath appointed that his people shall continue, and grow in a godly life, are such religious exercises, whereby Christians may be made fit to practice a godly life: and they are partly ordinary, that is, such as are commonly and usually to be practiced, of which sort there are many: and partly extraordinary, at some especial time, as fasting, and some rare solemnities in feasting and thanksgiving. And both of these are either public or private.

The public, such as are used in our open assemblies: ordinarily, these are three. First, the ministry of the word read, preached, and heard, as the Lord prescribeth. Secondly, the administration of the holy sacraments, and worthy receiving of the same. Thirdly, the exercise of prayer with thanksgiving and singing of Psalms. But because the



public cannot be daily had and enjoyed, (and yet we need daily relief and help) neither although they could, were they sufficient to enable us, to honor God, as it becometh us: therefore, God hath commanded us to use private exercises; whereof these eight be chief. First, watchfulness, meditation, and the armor of a Christian; unto the which, is to be added our own experience: and these properly belong to everyone alone by himself. The next are the use of company by conference and family exercise; and these are properly to be used of a man's self with others: the last two, which are prayer and reading, are common to both. The necessity whereof is so great, that if they be not known and used rightly and in good sort, the public will prove but unprofitable, and the whole life out of square, as shall be seen when we come to handle and speak more particularly of the right use of them.

And of the helps or means to continue a godly life, which they are, and the kinds of them, thus much be said. Now I will (as I promised in the entrance into this treatise) more fully show, what every one of these, is; and what force they have (God working thereby) to uphold the weight of a godly life: That all who list to consider it wisely, may see it, and so many as will use these means, may prove, and find it themselves. And first I will begin with the public: and afterwards, speak of the private. And I will so handle and speak of everyone (according to the skill which God hath given me) as may make most for this present purpose, that is, most largely of those means which with their use, are less known; and more briefly of those, with which men are most acquainted.

Neither let this trouble the reader, that I have made mention of some of them by other occasions in some other places: for whereas it may be objected, that these means called helps, are spoken of in other treatises of this book, as parts of a Christians duty. I answer, it is

true: for I have spoken of uprightness, one piece of the armor, and of watchfulness and prayer, in the former treatise; and so of the rest. And there I speak of them as of common duties and parts of godliness, as the love and fear of God be: but here I speak of them as special helps to godliness: for though I deny not, but that all the duties of a Christian man, are also helps to live happily; yet who doth not see, that these here mentioned, as the Word and the Sacraments, watching and prayer with the other, are more properly so called? As more specially fitting us for the right performing of all duties. Besides, in other places, I speak of them by occasion, and therefore more briefly: but here, of purpose; and therefore more largely. But let it suffice, that I understand these which I mention in this treatise, to be helps and means especially.

And more particularly of the armor and of the parts thereof, this I say: because otherwise, I must have given a watch-word about it afterwards, when I come to speak of it in due place: that though I speak of all the parts of it by occasion in one treatise or other; yet there I speak of them for the most part, as particular duties to be done in our several actions: but here I speak of them, as of such duties as must always abide, and be lodged in our hearts: and that we may have then, as a Larderhouse, always full of good and wholesome victual, and not as one dish to serve for some occasion; where we may observe, that though the one is not without the other, yet there is a manifest difference betwixt them, so that the one is not the other. And so I take it, the Apostle meant in the Epistle to the Ephesians: where when he had named diverse duties, as mercy, love, kindness, Ephes. chap. 4 and 5, which are parts of the armor; yet he saith after, Ephes. chap. 6:14. Stand fast in your armor, when ye have put it on: as if he should say, it is not enough to show kindness, mercy, to some persons at some time, and to have the use of the other parts of the armor when occasion shall be offered; but to put and keep them on,

that so we may ever have them in a readiness to be used: Even as women do not only trim and dress their houses with flowers, but they have also their gardens be set and filled with them, from whence they may have them always for such uses. This I thought good to say about the matter in hand, to free the reader from some doubts. Now I will proceed to the next chapter.

## **CHAP. 2.**

Of the public helps to increase godliness: and namely, the ministry of the word.

To begin therefore with the public means and helps, whereby God hath appointed to strengthen the believer, and settle him in a godly life; know we, that the word is the first and principal. And there shall need no great marveling at this, which I say, if we mark the royal and most excellent commendations, that we hear, and read of the Scriptures, which are this word of God. For besides that they are by good evidence and testimony proved to be the very truth and word of God (not the phantasies of man's brain) which he willeth us to search, sending us unto them, if we desire to know his mind and will towards us: so the authority of them is such, that by whomsoever it be gainsaid or called into question, we need not be troubled at it, and so be discomfited: no although it were an Angel from heaven (if any such thing were possible) much less the man of sin, who yet challengeth authority to be heard before them.

And that we may not doubt, but that all God's will is revealed in them, we are taught, that they are all-sufficient, that is, contain whatsoever is able to make one either an inheritor of salvation, or a true Christian, in which two consisteth true felicity. Now for the plainness and evidence of the heavenly matter, that is contained in

them, by the means which God hath used, and the order that he hath taken, for laying out the sweetness and beauty of them, they are in the most necessary points, easy to be understood and conceived even of the simple and ignorant. For besides that, he hath commanded them to be reverently and distinctly read in the assembly, he hath given unto his Church most excellent gifts (I mean pastors and teachers) to interpret and teach his whole counsel out of them; and to show the people how to profit by the doctrine of them: and to make the right use thereof, in such wise applying the same to them, as if they had been particularly, and only appointed for them. And in like manner, he hath provided to have these his holy Scriptures turned into those tongues and languages, which are understood of the diverse and sundry nations of the world, that thereby they may, as the good people of Thessalonica and Berea did, confer the Sermons which they hear, in their own tongue, with the Scriptures; and so find more clear light and comfort by them. All which being considered, it may not hardly be gathered, what a singular help, a sound ordinary ministry of the word is, to build up more strongly a weak Christian in a godly life. For we must consider that God hath appointed this preaching of his words to perfect the faith of his elect, and therefore S. Peter chargeth the shepherds to feed the flock of Christ which dependeth on them: and our Savior (Peters Schoolmaster) requireth, that as he loved him, so he should feed his lambs and his sheep. And it being preached with authority and power to persuade (not as the word of man, which is but weak and frothy, but as it is indeed the word of the living God) it is mighty in operation, and sharper than any two-edged sword, working in the people of God as a kind and forcible medicine upon a disease, and so becometh the power of God unto salvation to them.

But to say nothing of the benefit, which this ordinance of God bringeth to the unregenerate, who as yet walk in darkness (for it is

not pertinent to my purpose in this place to speak of that, which yet is a mighty and great mean to convert them from their old conversation, and from the power and bondage of Satan unto God) to omit that (I say) behold the manifold uses and daily helps that the regenerate and people of God have by it. First therefore, they are cleared from error and darkness about religion, and manners (wherewith otherwise they are fraught and much encumbered) and grow more sound in the knowledge of the truth, and see more particularly into the way and whole course of Christianity: which thing others even of God's children wanting, are so unsettled, and so holden under of ignorance and blindness, in many needful points, that they must needs find the less fruit of the Christian life (as if it were not to be enjoyed at all) and so become more dim patterns of holiness to others. Wherein this is more, that they who use these means diligently and reverently, do grow settled and established in their knowledge from day today: whereas others, who are destitute of this gracious help (do what they can) must want this (although they may have some benefit by private reading) if they lose not somewhat of that which before they had.

Again, this quickeneth them in their drowsiness: it cheereth them in their heaviness: it calleth them back from their wanderings. I speak briefly of ample and large matters (wherein I might be long, and that also not without the readers good liking and desire) it raiseth them up if they have fallen: it counselleth them in their doubtful cases; and wherein they are to seek of advice: and by experience of God's dealing with them in all estates (how he blesseth them in well doing, and contrarily) by the experience, I say, which they have, this preaching of the word of God ordinarily, is a mean whereby they are fast settled in a godly course, and keep well when they are well, rather than fickle and inconstant in the good carriage of themselves, as many are. And what a benefit is this? How is it sought by many

with tears, and yet of few obtained? Yea of sundry Christians thought to be impossible to be reached unto, because they know it not.

And yet to this (as great as it is) do even they who have had as weak beginnings in the Church of God, as any other of their brethren (by this heavenly direction taught out of God's word) attain and grow unto. For when in a sound, plain, and orderly manner, God's will is laid forth in preaching, this help many do get by it, that they do gird up the loins of their minds, that is, learn to lay aside, and cast off that which would hinder them; their inward corruptions especially: they prepare themselves to follow the rules, which lead and guide them to their duty: by this they espy their weakness, and how they are holden back when they have fallen; and which is the right way of proceeding: and this is the better done, the oftener that they are put in mind thereof. So that, this is the Sun which giveth light to them in all places: and the rule by which they frame all their actions; and therefore a Christian man though weak, being desirous to learn, doth by this find marvelous furtherance towards the godly life.

Besides this which I have said, the true Christian by his ordinary hearing is taught, to give some part and time of his life to reading of the Scriptures, and other good writers, as is said in another place; and that with good fruit, understanding and comfort: whereas without it, he were like to neglect, and be weary of that labor, and in stead thereof, to give himself to idleness, and to be vainly occupied; or though he should use it, yet to do it with little knowledge, comfort, or any other profit. And when a man is framed thus by the ministry of the word, he becometh a light and an example unto others, in token that he hath found great help by it himself.

Therefore if he may by the preaching of the word ordinarily be led into all truth necessary for him to know, and be delivered from error

in religion and manners; if he may be established and confirmed in the knowledge of the will of God; if he may be reformed in his affections and life daily, more and more increasing therein, and overcoming himself better thereby; if he may both be brought to bestow some time of his life (as his calling will permit) in reading, and so as that he may find profit thereby; and finally if he may become an example in time unto others: I may boldly affirm and conclude, that the ordinary preaching of the word is a singular means whereby God hath provided that his people should grow and increase in a godly life. Now then, they so using it, as they have elsewhere been taught, namely in the second commandment, that is, coming to hear with meekness and hungry hearts, and being attentive in hearing, and applying it to themselves, they reap the fruit, which I have said.

And if this be easily granted and yielded unto, I say no more but this: I would to God that they, who are in great account for their religion, and do oft and commonly hear the word, did find it so, and did reap this fruit by it, and were holpen all these ways unto godliness, which (God doth know) is seldom so. And therefore where this sound and plain teaching is wanting, how much more must the people needs be out of frame? But where the diligence, skill, love, and plainness in a good order of teaching cannot be found fault with in the Minister, it is certain, that the fault is in the hearers: That they, though otherwise they may belong to the Lord, yet are not reverent and attentive in hearing, are not prepared before to hear, or else do not digest willingly that which they have heard; but are surfeited of some dangerous qualities in their lives, or corruptions in their hearts: among which, this is a special one, that as they think of the person who teacheth, so do they of his doctrine, and not otherwise.

Now if in this one means, so great help may be gotten, what may be thought, when this and others go together? But I conclude with this exhortation, Feed the Lord's flock which dependeth upon you: and be instant in season and out of season, O ye Ministers of the Lord. Know the day of your visitation, and the things which belong to your peace, by preaching, O ye people, who live under the ministry of the word: lay up now in your harvest against the time of your necessity: and this be ye persuaded of, that ye shall have need of all that you gather. Seek to enjoy this liberty of the ministry of the word, ye that want it: and if ye may enjoy it as easily and with as little pain, as you do your market, think it worth your labor, if ye can no easilier come by it: and buy wisdom whatsoever it cost you, but sell it not, whatsoever ye may get for it: pray the Lord of the harvest to thrust forth laborers plentifully into the harvest, ye that are white unto the harvest to be labored amongst, and desirous to be brought into the Lord's barn.

Lastly, all ye that have the oversight of the Lord's ministry, see them teach soundly, plainly, faithfully and diligently, who are called to it: and go before them yourselves painfully, as lights and good examples: that many thanks may be given, and prayers made to God by the people for you, when you shall give them so good occasion to remember you, and for warming their hearts and comforting them with such good diet for their souls and liberal provision, and that in the day of accounts ye may have many to witness the godly care that ye had over them.

And thus much of the first public help for the increasing and nourishing of a godly and Christian life, in all such as have truly entered into it, that is to say, the word preached.



## CHAP. 3.

Of the second public help: namely, the Sacraments.

The next mean or help public, are the Sacraments, which (of the two) are more darkly seen and found to be helps to godliness, then the word, among the most part of those who are partakers of them: both because men have seldomer use of them, then of other doctrine; and also, for that they be not so fully instructed in the same. And of the two Sacraments, which God hath left to his Church, in this latter age to be enjoyed, Baptism is less seen and perceived to be an help, then the Lord's supper: In speaking whereof, I purpose only to stand upon this which I have taken in hand, namely, to show the Christian reader, how the Sacraments are means and helps to set him forward in a godly life (as too few do make them) and to leave him for other knowledge about the Sacraments (which is exceeding large) to those who have written of them at large, as M. P. Martyr, M. Calvin, M. Beza, and to ordinary teaching.

And this also I will do with as much brevity as I can: Therefore first seeing the Sacraments are helps necessarily adjoined unto the preaching of the word, and do visibly confirm and ratify that, which the word doth teach: and the covenant betwixt God and the believer made, is most surely sealed up, and effectual on both parts by them, thereby it may appear, what helps they are, both to the strengthening of faith, and encouragement to godly life: which that it may more plainly appear, let this which I have said, be thus unfolded to the Christian reader. God hath freely granted to every faithful person, that he will never call his sins to a reckoning: but will be his God, and love him to the end through Christ; for the making good of this promise, he hath put to his seal, and hath caused the same his

promise and will to be established in the sacrament, by so evident and infallible a sign as cannot deceive. Now therefore doth not this sacrament always remain to the faithful receiver, to whom it is made out, and granted; a clear witness, that whatsoever benefit is promised, is his: and as oft as any doubt hereof might, through weakness arise to the party, is it not hereby sufficiently removed? And therefore they are called of the Apostle, seals of the righteousness of faith.

And as God hath thus covenanted for his part; so hath every believer again in his own behalf covenanted to trust in God always, to endeavor to walk before him continually in uprightness of heart, and innocence of hands: Now of the truth of his heart the sacrament is a sign; which he having received, hath openly professed thereby, that he hath given and consecrated himself unto the Lord, and is now no more his own, to live as carnal will would desire. Is not therefore the sacrament, though it be not always received, yet is it not always before his eyes, as it were, to tell him what he hath done; yea and that not rashly nor by constraint, but with good advice, as knowing, that he shall never have cause to repent him of so doing? Seeing he believeth, that strength in measure shall be given him of God, to perform that which he hath promised and sealed?

Is not then the Sacrament a continual spurrer forward of him to perform his covenant? Is he not by the fresh remembrance of it, encouraged against temptations, weariness of doing his duty, and such other hindrances? Doth it not cause him to say against them all, how can I that am dead to sin, live any longer in it? So that although to others the Sacraments be a mystery, and hidden thing, and as a book written in Hebrew or Greek, which a simple man opening findeth nothing profitable for him, but saith I cannot read it (and yet the book contains most fruitful matter, if a skillful reader taketh it in

hand:) although I say, he who is ignorant, find no help nor benefit by the Sacraments; yet the true believer having been soundly instructed therein, beholdeth much in them, to encourage and set him forward in the godly life, having as sure hold of God's favor, and help by them also, as the same God, who cannot lie, is to be believed.

This may for the edifying of the simple, be seen particularly in the two Sacraments of our Church at this day, baptism and the Lord's supper. For every faithful Christian which hath been baptized, may as long as he liveth, have this benefit thereby, that as by his engrafting into Christ, he is one with him, and therefore seeth that while Christ liveth, he must and shall live also: so he having thereby perpetual union and fellowship with him, doth draw strength and grace from him, even as the branch doth from the vine, that so he may live the life of a Christian. If then he have that power of renewing him (which is signified and sealed by baptism) namely the power of Christ's death mortifying sin, and the virtue of his resurrection in raising him up to new life; is not baptism throughout his life a forcible means to help him forward in a Christian course, as oft as he doth duly consider it?

So in the Lord's supper, the faithful communicant, by the oft receiving of it, is not only by the bread and wine assured that his soul may be comforted by Christ, and so enjoyeth the same; but also is spiritually strengthened to all good duties; so that he findeth a most sovereign help by it, to grow up unto a perfect age in Christ Jesus. And this shall more appear, if we consider how manifoldly the faithful Christian is furthered, and set forward in the well framing and amending his life thereby, both in preparing himself to it before it come; in the action and present use of it, when he doth come thereto; and after the enjoining of, and departing from it. Of which three, seeing they may serve as well for a perpetual rule to examine

himself by, and to direct him in the right use of it always after, as well as to prove the matter which I have in hand (namely, that the Sacraments are great helps to godliness) I will stay a little while about them.

And for the preparing or making him fit to receive with profit, this is the manner how it ought to be done, namely: First, that he prove and try himself in these things, whether he have the knowledge of man's misery, of his redemption, of his renewing, and of the nature and benefit of that Sacrament, with the knowledge of other principal points; all which it is meet that he should have, who looketh for comfort by it. Secondly, that he hold fast his faith in the promises of salvation, which God hath wrought in him before, by the preaching of the Gospel: the which at this time may not be wanting, but holden fast, and after, particular falls recovered. The third is, that he keep his heart diligently to the renouncing, and subduing of all sin, and ready to any duty that he shall be called unto. Fourthly, and more particularly, that he have no swelling, nor rising of heart against any man or woman, no although they be his utter enemies: but be reconciled to them, and at peace with them, as he desireth to be with the Lord. And fifthly, that he being thus qualified, desire (as he shall have opportunity) to be partaker of this Sacrament, and to receive the benefit which God offereth by it. And this is the manner of examining a man's self: unto the which rules he that is suitable, he is a welcome guest to the Lord's table.

But because much sloth, forgetfulness, darkness, corruption and weakness do soon gather together, and so grow up even in good men, to the choking of these forenamed gifts of God, that such as have sometime found all these in themselves, yet at the time of receiving cannot find them; therefore at the coming to the Lord's supper, God giveth especial charge, that if in any of his people these graces should

by their own negligence and default, be weakened, dimmed and decayed, that they do not rashly put themselves forward to it in that case; but speedily seek to recover themselves again, by a due examination of their estate according to the forementioned rules: Which if they do then more hardly and difficultly obtain, and going about it, cannot see clearly that they are thus furnished, as they were sometimes, they may thank themselves; the fault is their own, for that they did so long neglect the same, and did not labor, when they were well, to keep well constantly: Let them not cease therefore till they recover; which of them that know how, being sanctified, shall be obtained. Now the recovering of themselves is on this manner: Let them go apart by themselves, and laying all other things aside, seriously enter into due consideration, what accuseth them, and troubleth their conscience, which in no wise may be omitted: then whatsoever be found amiss (be it sloth, carelessness, worldliness, distrust, uncharitableness, or any other like sin) let it be sensibly and heartily bewailed, acknowledged, renounced, Prov. 28:13, and lastly, a recovering of their faith, by apprehending God's mercy, Prov. 28:13, and their wants therein, and in their repentance, supplied again, by renewing their covenant with God. This manner of behavior in Christians before they offer themselves to the Lord's supper, is necessary after they have fallen (as I have said before:) and herein standeth their preparation to receive the Lord's supper. Which preparation is one of the three things necessarily required of them, who shall with profit come unto the Lord's supper.

And can this preparation be any less than a great help to all, which shall enjoy it? He who was before snared in the world, who had been filled with strong corruption, as with poison, fallen into some particular sins, who had neglected the nourishing of his faith, been at some bitter variance with his neighbor, or had done any such other like thing: now by this preparation calling himself home, repenting

and returning as this examination teacheth, doth he not find thereby a singular help (think we) to the recovering of his strength, and the doing of his former works again? And if he have done none of all these offenses (and therefore shall not need to offer such violence to himself) but hath kept a Christian course in his life, and followed a good direction to the peace of his conscience (as I doubt not but many do) yet as oft as he shall repair to this Sacrament in this estate shall he not be much confirmed and more strongly settled in the duties of Christianity, when he shall by examination find and see, that he (though frail) is a meet guest for the Lord's table, and therefore welcome; and not thrust out of the company, for want of his wedding garment? Shall it not be a great comfort at many other times, as oft as he shall remember and think upon it: and that it hath been thus with him already when he received, and thus may be also, as oft as he shall repair unto it again? So that even the preparation to the Lord's supper, is a great mean to go forward in godliness.

Now to come to the action itself, when a man rightly prepared, enjoyeth the present benefit of the Sacrament, and there is comforted and made glad by the words of Christ himself, the maker of the banquet, who biddeth him welcome and to be merry: saying, his body (which is meat indeed) and his blood (which is the only wholesome and savory drink) are prepared for him; how can he but be much heartened and be set forward in a Christian course, when he shall be thus revived and quickened in his soul with the spiritual duties which by true faith he feedeth upon, and that no less sensibly, then he eateth the bread and drinketh the wine?

And yet thus much I will say, that if this merry making at the Lord's board, were either in hollowness on the behalf of him that biddeth (as it is with many men who invite other to their table) or only a temporary and earthly benefit, on the behalf of the receiver, it were

not so much to be accounted of: but it being far otherwise, namely, both in goodness and perpetuity, a benefit that hath no companion, even a continual feast; it hath therefore great force to stir up the party to honor God. And from hence it is, that the communicant, as one admiring the goodness and kindness of God there declared to him, and of himself felt and enjoyed; breaketh forth into praises and saith, as is figured in Solomon his song, O Lord, thou hast made me drunk with the wine of thy seller! How sweet is thy love, and thy kindness past finding out? What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies?

Is it hard now to see, is it hard now to judge, how this heavenly banquet doth for the present time, and in the receiving thereof, or may at leastwise, enlarge the heart of the faithful servant of God, and make him fit for duty, and fill his heart with comfort, while he communicateth in the supper with the rest of the faithful, so welcome to the Lord, who invited him to it? For there, he may and ought to meditate on the daintiness of the banquet; on the love of him that ordained it; on the communion he hath with Christ and his graces, and on the outward signs, what they assure him of; and on the word preached, which showeth him all this: All these things, with such like, he may think on and apply to himself. For although the flesh striveth against the spirit, as well herein, as in other works of it; yet the faithful communicant in his measure, findeth his heart ready to yield up to the Lord in this heavenly banquet, no less, then I have said, even the sacrifice of praise and thanks, though all do it not in a like measure.

And even so to come to the third point, it is of the same force, after he hath received the Sacrament, and enjoyed the benefit therein bestowed upon him, to hearten him on, and strengthen him to every good work; even as a man well refreshed with meat, is made strong

to labor: this Sacrament (I say) doth after the receiving of it (where right use is made of it, according to God's appointment) through the remembrance and due consideration of the kindness of God therein offered and reaped, easily carry on the servant of God in a fervent desire of all well doing. In all that I say of the Sacrament, the wise reader (I doubt not) understandeth me, not that this alone, without other means and helps doth this; but as the Lord in great favor to his Church, hath provided variety of them for it, as the weakness of it doth require, as some public, some private: so he hath made this amongst the rest to be one, by the which, as by the rest, a godly life is much furthered.

Which I thought very meet to add, because of all other helps to the practice of Christianity, I am persuaded, that the Sacraments are least thought, or found to be so: and that they are used for the most part, without the benefit which God hath joined with them, that is, in ceremony only. And this wholesome or right using of them, because it is little seen or enjoyed; therefore is there such negligence in repairing to them, and unreverence, disorder, yea and profane behavior in the administering and receiving of them, which is the principal matter that is to be regarded about the Sacrament, and looked unto both of the minister and people.

But it is not my purpose to enter into this treatise: I conclude this point therefore, that seeing the Sacraments do seal up the promises of God to the faithful receiver, under a visible and infallible sign, and again bind him (in reverence be it spoken) to the performing of his covenant, and seeing particularly the first Sacrament of baptism doth engraft him into Christ, and that other of the Lord's supper doth by so holy preparation before he come, with such comfort ministering in and at his receiving, and such strengthening of him after, work upon him, as hath been said; that therefore the Sacraments are singular



helps for all true believers to grow in a godly life. And consequently, I say of the receivers of them, as of them which use the other helps, that he who is not made more able to conquer his lusts, and weaken the strength of sin, and is not more heartened to the life of godliness, doth abuse them, and seeth not God's purpose in ordaining them. Which sin how severely God will punish, the Corinthians example doth testify and prove.

## CHAP. 4.

Of public prayers: also of the private helps in general.

The public prayers solemnly offered to God in the congregation, and praising of him with Psalms, is another of these public helps. In the which, if that mind be in us, with the which we have been taught to come to all holy exercises, and so be prepared for them; who doubteth but that we may receive much help by them? Yea and the better a man is, the more he shall profit by them. For when the faithful, from God himself, have a promise that they shall be heard in all things that are good for them, even the most excellentest, and do then empty their hearts by confessing their sins, and with the rest of the godly, lift up their spirits and voices together in praising him; is there any doubt, but that they are afterward in private more cheerfully bent to serve him? And in that the ignorant (which in the best places is the greatest number) take no more profit by them, it is not long of the exercises, but that they are unfit to receive benefit by them: and a prejudicate opinion in some that they can take no good by them, and therefore partly in ignorance, partly in rash zeal, they give themselves to sleight and negligent hearing of them. The direct remedy to redress both faults, as far as in man lieth, were an ordinary able ministry: whereby both the ignorant might (besides

other good things) learn rightly how to use them: and the prejudicate ones (which conceive the worse of them, for that they see small fruit to follow of them) should be silent and have nothing to say against them, except with the Brownists, they will despise all public assemblies. But whatsoever the ignorant get, the children of God may find especial good refreshing by them: which is that thing that I have to prove and persuade. For when besides our own private supplications and thanksgivings, we have by the Lord himself, appointed for us these also in public: and that in so solemn a manner, the whole assembly consenting with us in the same, and God present amongst us to assist us, as he hath promised; the very ordinance of God (who is the author of them) doth promise a blessing thereto, as oft as we are partakers of them. So that if we come with reverence, and a feeling of our wants, with an earnest desire and confidence to obtain the things which we pray for, in true repentance, we shall receive fruit of them accordingly. But herein a prejudicate opinion, which is a rash judgment, doth much harm. For by reason of this, that the Ministers have been, for the most part disordered persons and ignorant, and too many remain so still; and thereby have brought themselves, by God's just judgment, and their own deserts, as the sons of Eli did, into dishonor and discredit: it hath come to pass, that through rash and preposterous judgment, many have had an evil opinion of that, which hath been done by them, and of the serving of God which they have used; and therefore have thought that they have had good cause to sequester themselves from being present at the service of God, which is performed by them; and thus they object against it.

Another sort have thought all set forms of prayer are to be disliked, and such only to be allowed and offered up to God, as by extemporary gift are conceived and uttered according to every ones necessity: which opinion is also to be reformed: Of both which I will

say somewhat being objections, though otherwise it be besides my purpose to discourse of them at large. This I say, as I have taken in hand, that public prayer, as hath been said of preaching and Sacraments, is a great help to godliness, to all such as have any measure of true godliness: or else it is long of themselves, who, through the ignorance and darkness that is in them, do not know, that they ought to pray always with all manner supplications and giving of thanks; and therefore publicly as well as privately, when many hearts are poured out to God rather than few, or one alone: or if they know this, their sin is the greater, in that they resist and spurn against it.

For to fortify this that I say, to the first objection I answer; although it be not to be denied, but that the example of ignorant and unreformed, especially notorious persons in the Ministry hath done, and doth much harm; yet if either they cannot be convicted, or if their crimes be such, as cannot remove them out of their places; there is just cause of grief, that such should have anything to do in God's matters, which are so weighty and to be dealt in with all high reverence: Yet, if this burden must be borne, I ask, if among many sweet liberties which we enjoy, we may not join in prayer with them, if we can pray in faith, seeing their unworthiness cannot withhold the fruit of God's promise from us, which is to one kind of prayer as well as to another, ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. And as it is far from me to be a patron of such, or to justify them: so yet, while we may enjoy the ministry of better, I would not refuse to be partaker of the prayers which are offered up by them. Who can blame him, who desireth to pray with better than they be? And yet better to join with them sometime, then to leave the assemblies public altogether.

Concerning the next objection, that though the ministers be not offensive as the former, yet they should use no set form of prayer, but as they are moved by God's spirit: I answer, it is a fond error so to think. For as there be necessary things to be prayed for, of all men, and always, and those are the most things which we are to pray to the Lord for: so there may be prescript forms of prayer made concerning all such things. Which being so, what letteth that in the reading of such forms either of confession of sins, request, or thanksgiving; what letteth (I say) that the hearers hearts may not profitably go with the same, both to humble, to quicken, and to comfort? For is the reading itself impure, when the minister in his own behalf and the people's, uttereth them to God? I speak not (ye see) of the matter of prayer, but of reading it: for if the matter be erroneous and naught, the pronouncing of it maketh it not good, anymore then the reading doth: if it be good and pure, being uttered or pronounced, the reading cannot hurt it or make it evil. And as the Church in the Scripture did and doth now sing Psalms upon a book to God, and yet though it utter a prescript form of words, I hope none will say, that it is a sin to do so, the heart being prepared: in like manner, to follow a prescript form of words in praying, is no sin: and therefore ought not to be offensive to any.

If it be said, how can men repeat the same form of words daily, as they do in the reading of public prayer, but it must needs be coldly done, and so abominable to God? I answer, it is not the oft praying for the same things, that maketh it odious to God, but when it is done with an irreverent, unprepared, and corrupt heart; for custom, not fervently and in faith. And further to satisfy them, they may know that in all Churches, and the best reformed that they would allege, there is a prescript form of prayer used: and therefore they who are of mind, that it ought not to be, must separate themselves from all Churches. Also if a set form of prayer were unlawful, then neither

were the Lord's prayer (which is a set form of prayer prescribed by our Savior himself) to be used. Which yet though it be sometime to be used in the form wherein it is set down: yet speaking of it by this occasion, I think it not amiss to add this one thing. That though our Savior tied us to the matter of this prayer, as being perfect and full: yet he tied us not to the words themselves, seeing we cannot either think on, remember, or desire at one instant, all the particulars contained in the same. And besides, we by craving particularly the things which we stand in need of, are more stirred up and moved.

But these thus answered, I will proceed, persuading all good Christians to lay aside contention, and endless, and (many of them also) needless questions about this matter: And to resolve with themselves, seeing it must of all, who are well advised, be granted, that the public prayers are an help to stir up God's graces in us, and to convey to us the many good blessings of God which we want, beside other notable effects: therefore, to look to themselves every way so carefully, that they may ever keep themselves fit to be helped and benefited by them, and with the same well-ordered hearts and minds to attend unto, and apply to themselves the prayers which either before and after the Sermon are uttered, or the other, which through the whole action of God's worship are read in their hearing: And not to be led by opinion, that they can take no profit by them; nor as the common sort do, who after long going to Church, do prove too truly, that they have taken no good by them, being not indeed able to show how they should pray, or behave themselves in that action. But seeing they have liberty to hear God's word preached where they may most commodiously enjoy it, (for so they are willed not only themselves, but to call upon their children to hear Sermons, and the Ministers are urged as well by their preaching, as by their living, to give good example) therefore to take their part in both, with cheerfulness and thanksgiving: And in singing of Psalms, such as

cannot read, should attend to them who are nearest them in the congregation, that they may join with them, and consent to the action of praising God with the rest of the assembly; and not to gaze, and toss vain imaginations and phantasies, where they should lift up pure hearts and hands to God. And as for such as refuse to come to take part in the worship of God, altogether, as the Brownists and such like, let them bear their shame before men, and their peace shall be small to Godward, while they sit at home with their own bare reading for their diet, who scorn the best liberties of the word preached, prayer, and the Sacraments in the public assemblies. For so I understand they do, as well other ways, as by the confession of themselves, and that before the Magistrate, examining what they did while, by the whole month and quarter, they absented themselves from the public meetings: answer was made by the examinee, they sat at home and read by themselves. Let all judge by what spirit such are led and guided.

Now having described and showed the nature and use of the public means, I think it needful before I do more particularly enter into the discourse of the private, to say somewhat of the necessity of them, as well as of the public. For that thousands of the professors, and of them which are of the visible Church (amongst whom we must hope that God hath many of his elect) are little acquainted with the private, but do think it needles for them to hearken after the same. And besides, some of the dear children of God for want of ordinary teaching, have little use of them: and therefore it is much the worse with them.

For these causes therefore, and such like, this is to be known and holden in firm persuasion, that the private are (in some sort) as needful as the public: for they may be used at all times, whereas the public cannot; as in persecution. For it being of necessity that as our

bodies, so our souls should have some daily refreshing: therefore seeing the public cannot daily be had, we must use private, as I said before: and therefore they are both authorized and commanded by one God. And the public are but a part of the helps, which God hath provided for the profiting of his Church: and therefore without the private, they do the less profit.

For men's coming to Church (besides which a great number know no other serving of God) cannot do that good to the best Christians, which is to be looked for, if it be not accompanied with these: as may be seen in every part of the public worship of God. For hearing of the word read and preached, doth little profit, where it is not joined with preparation to hear reverently and attentively, and where it is not mused on after, yea and as occasion shall offer, conferred of also: and if reading privately (where it may be enjoyed) be not used; what is more manifest then this, that almost all in a congregation do by and by forget that which they have heard, and make little use of it in their lives? And what greater cause can be rendered hereof then this, that they never look after matters concerning their souls, when they are about their private dealings, and (as we say) out of the Church?

Even so, what use do such make of the Lord's Supper? Who (for the most part) besides that they cannot tell how to prepare themselves to it; so if some Ministers, more careful over the people's souls, then others, do teach and examine them about the knowledge they have, yet cannot they be brought to try themselves indeed, in what true faith and unfeigned repentance they come: seeing they are not wont, through the whole quarter before their receiving, to beat their brains, or trouble themselves about such matters: Whereby it may be gathered for certainty, that whatsoever the Scriptures speak in the commendation thereof, they be in little account and reckoning with them. And if they do not privately before the receiving of the

Sacrament, nourish these good graces of God in themselves very carefully (for I speak even of the better sort of Christians, as well as of others) who seeth not, that they shall have much ado, to bring their hearts, willingly to sift themselves, and to seek for those gifts at that time?

So to say the same of the public hearing of prayer in the assembly, it is not only to be doubted, that they pray there in hypocrisy, drawing near to God with their mouths, their hearts being far from him, if they do neglect to pray alone, and secretly to God, and in their family: but also the public prayer groweth common with them, that is, wearisome, a bare ceremony, and for fashion (so far is it off, that they be eased and comforted by it) as I can prove by too sure experience at this day, in such as have not learned to make conscience of private prayer, but do separate the one from the other.

And by this which I have said, it may appear how necessary it is, that the private helps should be used of all such as have their part in the public. And besides, as our necessities do require it, so the Lord commanding the same, he hath given time and liberty from our other business and duties either in family or otherwise, to use holily and continue the same: So that our worldly affairs ought to give place to them, which through ignorance many count ridiculous, and foolish; and others, though they will not speak so grossly, yet being given over to the world so griply, will put aside little, or no business for the serving of God. Although it is manifest, that where God is most purely, and best served, their other business, as these earthly, have best success.

These few lines I thought good (before further discoursing of the private helps) to set down, that they which use them conscionably, may not think that they do anymore then they ought, and have need



of: they who use them but slackly and coldly, may bestow greater diligence therein, and that amongst all sorts they may be had in better regard, if they desire to see good days here upon earth.

## CHAP. 5.

Of the first private help, which is watchfulness.

And to begin with them, according to the division made of them, in the entrance into this treatise: the first private help is Watchfulness: worthily set in the first place, seeing it is as an eye to all the rest, to see them well and rightly used. And it is a careful observing of our hearts, and diligent looking to our ways, that they may be pleasing, and acceptable unto God. And first, that it is an observing of the heart, Solomon proveth, saying: Above all observations, observe thine heart: for from thence cometh life. And that it maketh a man to look diligently to his ways, who so is watchful indeed; let the words of the prophet testify; I thought I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth as with a bridle. And that by both these, God is pleased, it appeareth by the contrary: For so it is said, Hebr. 10:38. He that withdraweth himself from living by faith, (which cannot be without watching) my soul (saith God) shall have no pleasure in him: even as he delighteth in the contrary. This is in sundry places of the Scripture commended unto us, that we should have a great care how we live, and watch over all our ways. Saint Peter saith, 1. Pet. 5:7, be sober, and watch: as though he should say, notwithstanding we have sobriety, that is, a well ordering of our affections, which is a most fit virtue to keep the life in frame; yet without watchfulness, it will be lost, and depart from us. So our Savior joineth it with prayer where he saith, Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation: As giving us to learn thereby, that the force of

the one, is much weakened and abated without the other: and that men shall make but cold prayers, if they watch not their lives, yea and for opportunity to pray also.

And both render their reason why watching over ourselves carefully, should be a companion to us: seeing without it, we are by and by plunged into many noisome temptations by Satan, and our own sinful hearts. Besides, the necessity of this one help may easily be seen in our own experience, by the contrary sin, carelessness and security. For what doth more easily grieve the holy spirit of God, and quench it in us, then that whatsoever chaseth away godliness? Or what doth so set open the door to all confusion?

And further, because of the urgent necessity of it, Saint Paul warns Timothy to watch in all things: not in someone or few, but in all; and therefore at all times, in all places, with all persons, and by all occasions. It caused that holy man of God King David to covenant and profess this, that seeing he saw he could not discharge duty to God, without an especial regard and taking heed to his life (by reason of Satan's vigilancy:) I will watch or do wisely (saith he) till thou come unto me: I will walk in the uprightness of my heart, in the midst of my house. And that I may not be thought to speak absurdly, because I speak otherwise then most men's practice doth approve, view other Scriptures, and thou shalt see this truth more clearly: For I must make this foundation strong; seeing there is a great weight to be set upon it. In the third to the Hebrews; Take heed that there be not at any time in any of you an evil heart: this that he saith at any time, what can it mean less, then that from time to time, the heart, and the manifold affections and desires thereof, should be looked unto, and taken heed of, least thereby the Lord should be offended? &c.

This taking heed therefore to thyself, and to thy heart especially (because from thence the words and actions do come) must be thy companion from time to time, and thou must set this watch before the door of thy lips, and thou must be well acquainted with looking diligently to thy ways, that it may go well with thee, and that thou mayest prosper. But if thou beest a stranger unto it, and it unto thee, look to fall often (I mean) to fall dangerously, (for otherwise he that watcheth most warily, cannot be free from offending) look to find many wounds in thy soul, and to want many comforts in thy life.

And this I may boldly say, is the cause why many, and those not evil men, do make many jars in their lives, and break often into unseemly actions, and do many things against their holy profession, which they by and by cover with the gentle name of infirmities, when indeed they do rather willfully fulfill the desires of their hearts, and rashly and intemperately give themselves the bridle, refusing utterly in those cases this holy watchfulness; yea and stick not to count it bondage, and a depriving Christians of their liberty, and too straight an holding of them in: whereas, who seeth not, that watching is that to the life, which the eye-lid is to the eye; and that which the eye itself is to the whole body: and as it doth easily fall into many annoyances, except it be carefully and wisely guided from wind and weather; so it fareth with thy soul and life, when thou doest not take heed to them, as God's word and good instruction teacheth thee: for a due looking to thy ways, is the safety to thy life.

And because this is seldom welcome to men, and little in use; therefore is a well ordered and settled course, which should be diligently kept of them, a mere stranger to them. But contrariwise, because they are secure for the most part; therefore they have at least both their hearts out of frame, and their lives void of good order. For what other thing is to be said, when those which go for religious shall

be so hot, hasty and furious, that they are not fit to be lived with, as Nabal? Others so untrusty, and so hollow, that they cannot be dealt with, as Gehazi? Alas, I am weary of so often reprehending, and complaining of the unreformed qualities and actions of the most part of them who go for Christians, and many of them (it may be thought) are so indeed: and yet until they will take knowledge of this want of watchfulness, and learn to be acquainted with it, they shall never be at better stay, but out and in, off and on, never settled.

But they must go about it, to purpose and set their mind and delight upon it, if they desire to be the better by it. They must be content in this behalf, to be dealt with as children, whom we will not suffer to handle, much less to play with knives: and as people distracted are kept in from water for fear of hurting themselves; so must Christians abstain, as the Apostle saith, and by all means wean themselves from that which their hearts would naturally most desire, even their evil lusts which fight against their souls to destroy them. They may not be so bold as to venture into any company, without respect, nor to fall into any talk which liketh them, nor to give themselves any liberty in their desires; the prophet saith, he behaved himself as one weaned from his mothers breast. And as experienced Christians cannot but remember how they lay open to danger and offenses by all occasions, before they became watchful, and since do see, what a benefit it is to them, and keepeth them in safety on every side: so they may easily know and be able to discern, how ill it goeth with all such as walk not accompanied with it: which by little and little must be gotten, especially, because it is one of the helps, yea and that of greatest use (as I further will show in the next treatise) which God hath commanded us to use for our daily benefit.

But as our Savior admonisheth us, prayer is to go with it, as that which doth quicken, and (as it were) put life into it, and that causeth

it to be continued with much cheerfulness, and little tediousness, whiles we consider that God will bless it unto us, even as by praying we believe: therefore he saith, Watch and pray, least ye fall into temptation: where also he doth (and that not obscurely) assign and point out the time wherein we should watch, namely, even so long as we are in danger of being tempted and drawn to sin. Which I observe, because many good Christians not having well weighed it, do think it very much they should diligently stand upon their watch, as thinking that it depriveth them of much sweet liberty, and therefore do, as they think, with good reason dislike and refuse to be guided by that doctrine: although with little good advice, as they who will not be contentious, may easily see, by that which hath been said about this matter.

And for mine own part, I thank God, I can say, that many godly Christians in my knowledge, have reasoned against the careful use of it, when they heard it first urged, and before they had experience of it (for they thought it very much, that all which they had done in rashness, haste, and without good advice (as their whole life had been little better) should be brought in question:) and yet since, they having found the fruit of it so sweet, and the gain so great, after better advice, they would in no wise forgo it again, and be let loose to their former rashness and security. So I doubt not, but that many, to whom God hath given some taste and savor in heavenly things, for want of experience may at first, think the urging of this watching, to be over strict; yet after further insight into it, as both commanded us of God, and it self of singular gain, they shall see their error, and rather pray most earnestly to have their part in it, then to hold their former judgment. I speak not, as though any which fear God were mere strangers to this grace and gift of God (for I know they are not without it sometimes) but for that either in their judgment they are not resolved, that it ought to be in use with them from time to time,

that is to say, one time as well as another: or if they be, yet they have too much neglected it.

As for them which object, that they cannot be so mortified as some are, nor be always observing themselves as some do, contenting themselves with that which they have, I say, it is a speech much unbeseeming Christians, who are to profess growing forward to more watchfulness, as to all other kinds of grace. And yet I count their case better than theirs, who think they can serve God (they hope) without all this ado: For they indeed bear themselves in hand, that whiles in some general sort they pray at some time, and go to Church, they need not greatly examine their other behavior beside, or take heed unto the same. Let all such please themselves as they list, sure it is, they resist God: and greatly to be lamented it is, that men being professors of the Gospel, should have so little use of this so gracious a help, so often preached unto them.

But to let them go, see thou, whosoever thou art, who desirest to walk with God in peace, that thou circumspectly look unto thy steps, and the several affections of thy heart, what and how thou carriest thyself, as I have showed, how thou oughtest to endeavor thyself to watch in all things. And this is the rather to be marked and learned, because it lendeth help to all the other rules which hereafter follow, for directing thee in all the actions of the day, as I have said: Because (as it followeth) neither in company with others, nor alone by thyself canst thou please God, nor in prosperity nor adversity, except thou beest wary and watchful to be led by God's word therein. So necessary to a Christian is this virtue, that the Apostle S. Paul to the Ephesians giveth this warning: When ye have put on the whole armor, and withstood the enemy, by it; yet after take heed that ye stand fast: least by the subtle and continual attendance of the enemy, your fall be the greater. Which may easily be, if we consider amongst

how many occasions and provocations we walk, and how shiftless we are to avoid them: yea rather how ready of ourselves to like well of them, and give place unto them.

Our evil lusts, wherewith we be full fraught, do carry us headlong into sundry iniquities, in so much that we can go about nothing, but we may feel (if we can discern) that someone or other of them is in our way to hurt us, and at hand to molest and disquiet us: or if we cannot espy it for the present time, yet it may be perceived afterward that it was so.

If we be occupied in holy and spiritual duties, we have shame and hypocrisy on the one side to hinder us: dullness, weariness, untowardness, and many such like poisoned corruptions, on the other side to break us off. If we have to do in things lawful, and indifferent, and of their own nature not evil, as recreation, or earthly business, we are secure and careless how we do them: we have boldness to defend ourselves, be the manner of doing them, and our end and purpose never so vain and evil. If we go about any evil thing, we have reason and strength of persuasion from the pleasure and profit to go through with it, and to see no danger that accompanieth it, but to extenuate it, and not to look to the end, as we ought to do: but all sound reason to dissuade us is weak, the devil showing himself at such times as a tempter, who yet will afterward come to us as an accuser, when we should repent.

Therefore if we be not skillful to know these disordered lusts, diligent to espy, prevent and avoid them, and so have this foresaid watchfulness over our lives, as a helpful companion with us; it cannot otherwise be, but that we commit many things unbecoming us, contrary to the holy doctrine which we profess to follow; and that in many things through the whole course of our lives. Now when a

man is thus carried of his intemperate affections, and bringeth forth the loathsome fruit thereof, what comfort can his life afford him? Even all such to whom it is a sad matter to abridge themselves of their foolish will and vain desires, and to whom it is a death to withdraw their heart from that which they long after, or to pluck back their eye from that which it delighteth in, they must feed upon froth, and take comfort in folly: but as for the sound and constant joy of them who have made a watchful life their greatest quiet (who have therefore liberty and free access to solace their souls in the variety of heavenly pleasures) this joy (I say) they are strangers unto, neither can they be partakers thereof.

For hereby the Lord hath freely granted us to find and enjoy another manner of living here in this world, then the most do know or believe, even a peaceable life to Godward, safe and sweet, I mean, so far as of sinners in a vale of misery may be enjoyed; which whosoever be void of, although they have variety of earthly pleasures and delights, yet one vexation coming among them, shall make all comforts unsavory and irksome unto them: As may appear in Pharaoh, when but someone of the plagues of Egypt were upon him: in Nebuchadnezzar, when he had his fearful dream: and in Balthazar, when in the midst of his jollity, that fearful and unwelcome handwriting on the wall at midnight was seen of him: and among all these there is none in whom this doth more lively appear, then in Haman, who for all his wealth, honor and promotion, could not satisfy himself, while one mean man, yea a stranger, Mordecai, refused to bow to him.

And to come nearer to such of whom the true God was more heard of or known, the same may be said of Saul; who although he were a King, yet when the Lord answered him no more, his heaviness was deadly: of Nabal likewise, who when he heard he must die and go



from all, he became senseless through sorrow and anguish, and was as a stone: and of Zidkijah, who for all his boasting of the spirit of God, yet being a false Prophet and a flatterer, was driven to hide himself from chamber to chamber, when the arrow of the Lord was sent forth against him, when the Kings shelter could not keep him, as Michaiah told him. All these when they had but someone disturbance in their life, how did it make all other delights unpleasant unto them? So that I may truly say, that as the life which is passed in watchfulness, is free from many, and those also the greatest discomforts, and filled with the contrary peace: so whatsoever a man enjoyeth according to his hearts desire, yet not looking to his ways warily, to keep himself from evil, fear and sorrow shall ever befall him, unless (which is worse) he be hardened: so that his life shall be found to have little in it, worthy the rejoicing in.

And what cause there is to urge this part of Christian duty of continual watching, we may see by the example of our grandmother Eve, who being in the estate of innocence, and therefore the liker to have been kept from evil; yet seeing she was not circumspect and watchful to hold close to the commandment, we see she became the cause of transgression unto her husband, and consequently of the universal misery of her posterity. The like we may see by the example of king David, whom though the Scripture doth renown with as great commendation for his meditating in the law of God, as any man: yet for that he was not armed with a watchful heart at that one time when he walked on the roof of his palace; behold how the devil had laid a bait for him (which he, as wise as he was, could not discern) and by his subtle and secret handling of the matter, caught him in his snare: So that he received such recompense for the letting loose of his heart at that time, both in outward reproach and inward anguish and bitterness of soul, that by good right should make other men cleave fast to watchfulness, and be faithful unto the Lord; yea and to

beware with all diligence, that they dally not with the baits of sin at any time, nor give their hearts the bridle, until they be gone so far, that they cannot, before great offense be committed, be called back again. The experience that I have gathered, since I began to look more advisedly into this thing, I mean into the necessity and benefit of a watchful course, which hath been long enough to teach and advise both myself and others upon so long a trial (well-nigh these thirty years in some manner as I have been able) this experience (I say) doth make me the bolder and earnestest in it, to persuade such as have truly embraced the Gospel, that they would adjoin herewith this godly watch, a special nourisher and strengthener of their faith, to settle themselves therein whatsoever they go about, or take in hand: as that their talk be not idle and frothy, but savory and powdered with salt; that their actions be such, as they may defend with peace of conscience against their accusers; and that they labor to suppress, and to bring into subjection even their wicked thoughts and desires, and weaken even the body of sin itself, I mean the old man with his lusts. For behold and this know, that even amongst those who rejoice in the testimony of a good conscience, such do always honor the Gospel most; most stop the mouth of the gainsayer, and do carry themselves most constantly and continually in an even and good course, so far as they have knowledge, who have been wise this way, and who have determined with themselves to stand upon their watch from time to time. And on the other side, such as in whom many good things may be seen (I speak both of teachers and hearers) and are for sundry causes much to be accounted of; yet being noted for rash and unstayed in their actions, and not so much looking to themselves, by wise government of themselves, have done the less good to others by their example, and have caused the other gifts which they have to be the less regarded. God be gloried for the good that is done by this in many: but if it were more commonly embraced and taken up of many more, who for knowledge are able to season

and give light to numbers, they should not be most in disgrace who have least deserved it, nor many please themselves in a loose and unprofitable course, which beside that, it withholdeth from them much sound comfort, it is a sore blemish in their lives. Yet this I thought good to add, for as much as the Romish Church, especially they who will seem more devout than the rest, stand much upon their diligent keeping of the customs of their mother Church, and the precepts of the same, who might therefore seem to themselves, and be thought of others to be before others in godliness: let all know, that this which I have said of watchfulness, leaveth not the least piece of commendation to them. For they watch to keep the observances of men; but watchfulness must be used for the obeying of the commandments of God: they superstitiously watch to observe some hours and days and times, wherein if they perform anything in outward working, they think themselves more holy than others, though other times be little regarded: but the watchfulness which pleaseth God, tendeth to every hour, day and time, as well one as another. And to speak of their best watch which they keep over their lives, yet from their own words I conclude, that it cannot be allowed of God, because it cometh not of faith, that is, of assurance of the favor of God, and consequently that he will bless it (for this faith, which they call the Protestants faith, they utterly renounce) without which yet, it is impossible to please God.

Now to grow to an end about this matter. It is further to be marked, that (because true Christians, and the dearest servants of God do complain of some especial infirmities, wherewith they find themselves more troubled than with any other) they must be more suspicious of, and vigilant against them, than others. And because the devil doth more easily wind them into some sins, than others (as he seeth their disposition and inclination, and thereby the greater danger they are in, by means thereof) therefore they are taught in

wisdom and experience to have a more narrow eye over them, and more especially to avoid the very occasions of them whereby they have fallen. For example, put the case, that some are strongly tempted to the sin of uncleanness, who being blindfolded about that which they desire, do count it no offense, though they pass their bounds very greatly in wantonness of eye, in liberty of speech that way, or secret desires, of though they see themselves snared therewith; yet having through long custom nourished their hearts in such loathsome delights, and too faintly misliked their offense when they saw it, have brought themselves into bondage to their lusts.

In this therefore if there be not much occupying of the heart against this sin, to see into, and weigh the loathsomeness, shame and danger of it; how unbeseeming it is God's servants to be subject to such slavery; if it be not acknowledged heartily to God, earnest and daily prayers as occasion shall be offered, sent up to God against it, with confidence both of pardon and power to mortify and weaken it, with strong and many reasons to disgrace and renounce it, and the occasions of nourishing it wisely and watchfully avoided; even this one sin, though they should never offend grossly, would hold the conscience in great unquietness, cause the parties to wander in deep sorrow, and make them unfit to Christian duties: yea if there be not more labor bestowed there, then in other parts of the life, it will make everything to go forward much the worse, and in other actions of the life much confusion to grow; and the longer they have nourished such vain dreams, the more hardly they shall awake out of them, even when they gladly would. And that which I say of this one, I may as truly say of the rest, if they have been harbored. To this purpose, is that complaint of the people of Israel in their repentance and turning to God: wherein they declare that one sin did more trouble them, then some other.

For thus they say in their confession: We have sinned against thee, O Lord, but especially in asking us a king, besides all our other sins. And as it troubled them most when they asked pardon of God; so it appeareth in the story, that of all other sins they were most drawn by that to offend God: For when they would needs have a King against the will of God, and Samuel was sent from God to tell them what a manner of one he should be, if they would needs have one contrary to God's mind; it is expressly said, that the people would not hear the voice of Samuel, but answered, nay, but there shall be a King over us, and we will be like all other nations. Therefore as their sin, whereby they did most offend God, put them to greatest trouble: so must those especial sins, which have prevailed against God's children, be most watched against and avoided.

And is there not great reason in it, forasmuch as they have most disquieted them, that they should bend the most force of their strength against them? Even as if someone troublesome person in a town should disquiet the whole, all would lay their help together to remove and keep him out; And as in an house which hath many and great commodities, and yet someone sore annoyance, as a principal chimney casting smoke, with great speed that shall be redressed, more than other things, which yet are to be regarded likewise: so in the life of sound Christians, wherein many good blessings of God may be reaped and enjoyed, the chief ruins are to be chiefly looked unto, although the meaner are not to be neglected. And great labor must be taken about it, and watching against that sin, which most prevaieth in us; and much more, then against some other, by which there is less danger to be feared.

And this help (as I have declared how) if it be used, and the means faithfully practiced from time to time, let no doubt be made (seeing God hath promised success thereby, even greater grace in the use

thereof, then the sin shall be able to resist) let no doubt (I say) be made, but that they shall master it, so far, as it shall bring peace; unless it be the case of unmarried persons, to whom God hath appointed marriage for a lawful remedy, when by none of the forementioned, or the like means, the gift of continency can no longer be enjoyed.

This advice how unsavory and unwelcome soever it be to such as are wedded to their lusts, and will offer no violence to them: yet such as know the smart that is raised by this sin, and that sometime the dear servants of God have been deceived by it, will be glad to be directed and helped against it. And that which I have said of this, I may say of pride, worldliness, anger, malice, revenge, unjust dealing and lying, that as every man is more easily overcome of, or hurt by them, more than of other sins; so he should have a more continual fear of them, watchfulness against them, and bestow more time in seeking the rooting out of them: that so the wealth and safety of the whole life may be preserved, when such noisome sores, as did most of all impair the same, be cured.

But if men be either ignorant of this duty, or cannot be persuaded to set themselves to the entertaining of it, and to get acquaintance with it, they must look to live destitute of a chief part of godliness; or if it be but now and then in some especial actions and parts of our life, regarded and looked unto (as it is done of them who are not greatly experienced in the practice of Christianity) it will make the godly life in great part to be bereaved both of her gain and beauty.

Our hearts must not range where they list, nor our delights be fastened where we please; but our eyes, our tongues, our ears, hands, feet, and the whole powers of our minds, and members of our bodies must beholden within compass. In so much, that if we see, we have

but broken out of our constant course a little, and that our consciences begin to check us, we should tremble to think what we have done: and fear always for the time to come, least we should offend. We must watch when we are well, to keep well: and when we have been deceived, to return speedily again: we must watch in trouble, against trifleness and impatience: in prosperity, against wantonness and lightness, Job. 31:1. If we could frame to this, we should do well enough, as he that looketh to his foot in a slippery place, shall not be hurt. And if we may by watching over ourselves, have our whole life in safety, and welfare; are we not worthy to smart, if we cannot do so much for so great a benefit? Therefore, most worthily do such suffer hardness and sorrow, who will in no wise be brought to take heed to their ways; but cry out, that it is preciseness and a kind of death unto them, to be restrained from their noisome and dangerous liberties: From whence ariseth boldness and willfulness, which cannot want much sin. But this watchfulness doth God require to be in us, and to be accounted no tediousness, but had in high price: and he that with an honest heart and good conscience submitteth himself hereunto, he shall be able to prove by good experience, that watchfulness is a great mean to maintain a godly life. Thus much for the more plain and full handling of this first private help, called watchfulness.

## **CHAP. 6.**

Of Meditation, the second private help.

Now followeth the second, which is Meditation: And that is when we do of purpose, separate ourselves from all other things, and consider as we are able, and think of some points of instruction necessary to lead us forward to the kingdom of heaven, and the better

strengthening of us against the devil and this present evil world, and to the well ordering of our lives. I say of purpose, seeing we both must mind such things in good advisedness, and set ourselves about them resolutely, when we take them in hand; that they may be done with more reverence and profit: and also seeing it falleth out for the most part, that we seldom enter into meditation of heavenly things, when we do not intend them, but are led by the objects of our minds, eyes, or ears an hundred ways amiss, or if any good thought arise, it is repelled by and by, and goeth no further. To proceed I say, that when we meditate, we ought to separate ourselves from all company and troublesome occasions, as our Savior commandeth us to do, when we pray privately (these two being companions) as in our chamber privately, or in the field, or some commodious place, that we may the better perform it: the smallest occasions soon breaking us off from such service of God.

And I say lastly, that we must there set our minds on work, about the cogitation of things heavenly, by calling to remembrance someone or other of them which we know: and so debate and reason about the same, that our affections may thereby be moved to love and delight in, or to hate and fear, according to that which we meditate on; so that we may make some good use of it to ourselves. And this spiritual exercise of meditation is even that which putteth life and strength into all other duties, and parts of God's worship. And this the holy Ghost reporteth of Isaac the Patriarch, that he went out into the field toward the evening to meditate. Which had not been commendable, if he had not used so to do (seeing it is the right kind of such holy duties to be oft in use) being taught of his father Abraham, who was the friend of God, and very familiar with him, and therefore (we may be sure) had much communion and talk with him. As also our father Enoch did, who for proof hereof, is said in his whole life, to have walked with God.



And this are all such as desire to take any good by it, to know: that they must be acquainted thoroughly with this sweet and heavenly communing with the Lord and themselves, which was called of the Fathers of ancient time, their Soliloquies, that is, the talk which they used to have alone by themselves: That as men wearied, desire rest; so we by the variety and multiplicity of business in this world, being troubled and distracted, may seek ease to our minds by meditation.

For otherwise we may muse and think upon any good things, and ponder our words and actions which we do, to see them done aright: which yet is not this kind of meditation that I now speak of, but that watchfulness mentioned before; which is a wary regarding, and taking heed to our ways, in one thing after another. Which yet the Prophet calleth meditation also: as where he saith, All the day long do I meditate on thy word: and in Joshua; Thou shalt meditate day and night on the book of the law: which we know, could not be understood of meditation by intermission of company, or other actions, and business, but in their whole course a circumspect care and regard that they might be done after the word. And the matter of this our meditation, may be of any part of God's word: on God himself, his wisdom, power; his mercy, or of the infinite variety of good things which we receive of his free bounty; also of his works and judgments: or on our estate, as our sins, and the vileness of our corruption, that we yet carry about us, our mortality, of the changes in this world, or of our deliverance from sin, and death: of the manifold afflictions of this life, and how we may in best manner bear and go through them, and the benefit thereof, and the manifold and great privileges which we enjoy daily through the inestimable kindness of God toward us: but specially of those things which we have most special need of.

These and such like are the matter of our meditation, and as oft as we go aside to think with purpose and desire of heart upon these things, or any of them, for the better calling of our minds out of the world, then we are said to meditate: so when in or about any of these, we sigh, moan, complain to God, or rejoice, and are quickened in our hearts by such occasions, even that also is meditation, and most commonly joined with prayer. Of which two holy exercises the book of the Psalms is full, namely that 119th Psalm: where the man of God setteth down his meditations, which he had in every state of his: as either lamentation, complaints, or supplications in his affliction; or joy and thanks for deliverances and prosperity.

By this understand, what manner of exercise meditation is: Even such an exercise it is, which is required of thee from time to time (as may be convenient) through thy life, that by recording holy and divine things, especially those which may make thee sound in the matter of thy salvation, a little time (when thou mayest best) may be bestowed of thee to dry up thy fleshly and bad humors of earthly mindedness and worldliness, &c. or to quicken thy dull heart, least after thy sleep in sin, the devil maketh thee forget thy former well-orderedness. And because I am too sure that few are acquainted with it, though it be a help most profitable to godliness, I will somewhat more at large speak of it, that the practice of it may be more common: and that they which use it with the other helps, may much more cheerfully go through their course. How necessary this heavenly exercise and recourse to God is, may easily be conceived, for that the hearts even of good Christians are so seasoned with unsavory thoughts, desires, and delights of folly, vanity, and much other naughtiness (seeing the best are changed and reformed but in part) that they think it utterly impossible to bring them to any better point; and therefore many by this error do not greatly go about it: yet if such noisome poisons be suffered to lurk and remain in them, we

know, they do not only, as sour weeds choke the plants of grace in them, but also grow up, and bring forth most noisome and dangerous fruits, as by woeful experience men feel and try.

And for the weeding these out of the ground of their hearts, there is no means so available, as this considering oft, and deep meditating on them: namely, what swarms of wicked cogitations and lusts, do lodge in the heart, and to find them out, also to bring them into a vile account, to be weary and ashamed of them, and so to entertain better in their room. I say there is no help more available to hunt and purge them out, because although by the word we know them, by conference we do revive the remembrance of them, and by reading we do both: yet all these run out of our riven heads, and abide meanly with us to suppress our corruptions, and to tame our hearts until we bring ourselves to often and much musing and debating of the good things which we hear and read of, that so we may digest them; and of the evils which we hear, that we may abandon them: even as worldly men ponder deeply their affairs which are weighty.

Now when we see so far into the danger of them, and be wearied with the noisomeness of them, that we will tie ourselves oft to gage these hearts of ours, to sift our thoughts, to accuse and condemn them, as we find cause by the filthiness and shame of them, and herein will deal truly, as we love our souls: then do we begin to break the knot of such cursed swarms, and to chase away the lurking litter of profane thoughts and desires out of our hearts; then we wax more watchful against them after, and make more conscience of them, adjoining thereto, inward and earnest requests to God for assistance and blessing: Then also we shall furnish our hearts more graciously with heavenly cogitations and holy desires: all which make greatly for the well passing of our days. Therefore no man that will weigh how great things are wrought in our hearts, by holy meditating upon our estate,

and upon God's bountifulness towards us, namely, even a framing of us after the image of God, shall need to doubt how necessary it is.

And so much the more we are to think it, because it is well known by Scripture, and tried by experience, that our hearts are deceitful above measure: and thereby we bear ourselves in hand, that if we do once obtain thus much of them, that we can commend that which is good, and speak against evil, we are ready to think our estate to be right marvelous good, when yet in the meanwhile, if we do not find our hearts in our secret meditations (and when we search our thoughts alone by ourselves, how they stand affected) that we can feel unfeigned hatred of evil to be in them, and love to goodness: we do but deceive ourselves. And in every little trial, we shall find it otherwise then we would think: I mean, that sin sitteth nearer and is faster glued to us, then we did imagine.

For as he which goeth to war, is first trained and made fit to use his weapon at home: and the scholar trieth masteries privately, before he come forth to dispute openly: So a good Christian will try what he can do against his affections and sin, alone by himself in his solitary meditation, and resolve against the same (accordingly as he seeth the difficulty thereof to require) before he can in his common dealings, with all sorts and companies, be strong from temptations and falls, and free from offense giving in his words and deeds. And therefore on the contrary, this is the cause, why so many bewray themselves to be hypocrites before men, for that they have no trial of the truth and simplicity of their hearts alone by themselves, in judging and proving the uprightness of them before God, and therefore have not sought strength of him against their infirmities.

Oh how doth this communing with the Lord in secret, and debating with ourselves about our mortality and corruption, and of his favor

in vanquishing them; how (I say) doth this, as ointment mollify our hard hearts, and make them to relent, and doth relieve them pleasantly with the sweetness of it? How doth this estranging of ourselves from worldly impediments, draw us into near and heavenly communion with our God? How doth it make us acquainted with the manifold rebellions of our nature? With our blindness, security, earthliness, and infinite other loathsome filthiness, which neither we ourselves will take knowledge of, while we carry ourselves in many things as good Christians amongst men; neither any other (but such as do know it) would ever think, that so much poison could be enclosed in so narrow a room, as within the compass of one silly man.

Oh the fruit and benefit, which by our meditation and private prayer we reap, is so great (the spirit of God changing our hearts thereby, from their daily course and custom more and more, and bringing the heavenly life into more liking with us, and making it more easy and sweet, which with the men of the world is so irksome and unsavory) that none can well express or conceive it, but he which hath felt the same? For by it, God bringeth to pass, that the sugared baits of earthly delights and transitory pleasures of the world (though Satan kindleth an excessive and an inordinate love of them in us) become not deadly poison unto us, as they do to many, the Lord teaching us to see the painted vizard and deceivable picture of them by looking into them thoroughly, that we may beware of them.

And as the Scripture noteth, how the men of God, who are most commended there for their piety, as Moses, David, Paul, and others, were much taken up of this exercise; so I dare boldly affirm, that the most godly of our time, may thank God much for their acquaintance with it, and much use of it: and others that are strangers to it, how wise and forward soever they be in practice of Christian duty, should

be much more purged and cleansed from evil, if with their other services of God, they were conversant in this meditation joined with their private prayers, and this secret talking with God, and with their own hearts.

And therefore although I look not by this speech to persuade profane men and such as are addicted, and given over to the full enjoining of their hearts desire in the things of this present world, to regard this practice of musing: yet my hope is, that I shall easily prevail with those; Who have been ready and willing long ago, if they might have had any plain direction to teach them how to use it; to prevail (I say) with them, to have it in greater reckoning, for the near and inward acquaintance which they may have with God by it, as by little and little they shall be enabled. But the truth is indeed, that it is new and strange to such as have not been accustomed to it, though people of good hope: in so much, that when they hear by the word of God, that such a duty is required by him at their hands, they are ready (though it tend to their great benefit) to reason against it, as needles, and too hard to be attained unto, contenting themselves to serve God without it rather, then to embrace it immediately, until they may see further into the necessity, benefit, and possibility of it. And for the first two, how necessary and profitable it is, I have showed; as also it will further appear by that which followeth, of the lets which do hinder it, and the remedies against them. And then I will show how possible, yea in time how easy it will become; and then will the benefit and fruit thereof, most chiefly appear. And concerning the letters how many and great soever they be, before I speak of them, I have no doubt, notwithstanding them, by God's assistance to make the way so easy, and plain to the true Christian to meditation (in this treatise of and about it) that by the same, the difficulties and discouragements which do most trouble them, shall be removed, or at least weakened, that howsoever some take no profit by it, they

shall have the way showed them in a few leaves, which they also may learn in a few weeks, to make good benefit of it, which otherwise they may (without help) be void of for many years.

To say somewhat therefore of the impediments first, which hold God's people strangers from the use of meditation with profit, they are of two sorts: For either they are such as hinder them altogether from going about, or entering into it; or else they keep them from taking any good thereby, although they set apart all other things of purpose, that they may give themselves (for the time) wholly thereto. Of the former sort, there are three: The first is, when a Christian knowing this duty to be required of him, goeth about it, either in the morning (as I here persuade, if it may be) or at any other convenient time, but he hath no matter in readiness to meditate upon: he is empty, barren, and utterly to seek about what to bestow the time, and his cogitations: for although he hath heard many things in sermons, and wanteth many graces, which might drive him the rather to meditation the better to come by them, and carrieth about many corruptions, and hath received many blessings and mercies from God; yet the devil holdeth him, as it were blind, forgetful, and his mind confounded (it being occupied and taken up usually other ways amiss) so that he can find nothing to muse or consider upon, whereby he might season his heart.

Which when he seeth, and thereby that he cannot proceed in the duty which he hath been taught to perform, and desireth also to do the same: he is exceedingly discouraged, made heavy hearted, and thereby the more hardly persuaded to go about it anymore, but unable to ask the way to redress the same. For they who are so snared and overmatched by the devil, can hardly seek remedy, if anything be amiss with them, but leave of altogether from the good, in the which they perceive themselves to be stopped: which is clean

contrary to the practice of the children of this world, who are so wise in their kind, that if they be disappointed and broken off, from their purpose one way, they will seek the accomplishment of their desire many other ways, rather than to be frustrated.

Now against this Let, I have set down hereafter in this treatise a way to remedy it: unto the which I refer the reader; that is to say, certain rules to help him to meditate, and examples also to set him on work: yet least every weak Christian should not be able sufficiently to direct himself, this I add further and more particularly, that it shall be expedient for him, principally to propound to himself, as he is able these four things (till he shall be better able) to help himself, to muse of them. First, of his unworthiness, vileness, and other his several corruptions, and sins. Secondly, of the greatness of God's bounty in forgiving so many, and subduing daily more and more the dominion of sin and Satan in him. Thirdly, he is to think how he may be guided through that present day, after the rules of his daily direction, especially those that seem hardest to be followed, both the well ordering of the heart, and framing his life, so far as they agree with God's word. Fourthly, let him meditate on the several parts of the Christian armor, how God hath appointed to strengthen him thereby, and by the other helps, which I set down to be used daily, for his better going forward, and how sweet his life shall be by these helps in many respects more, then otherwise it can possibly be, and how to watch against all lets which may arise to hinder him from this course.

These or so many of them as he may conveniently, when he goeth about it, if he hath no other thing more necessary, and in the best manner that he can be directed (through the counsel of any who is able) these (I say) are an especial remedy to help him, who for want of matter to meditate on, should neglect or omit it; and for variety, those meditations which I shall set down, shall help him forward



also. For there is no true believer (how weak soever he be) but he is fit (if he be willing) to follow this direction.

The next impediment of the first sort that hindereth a Christian from meditating, is an unfit mind unto spiritual and heavenly duties, as when it being carried after other desires, is slow and unwilling to be occupied in cogitation or consideration of any holy matters: and therefore letteth pass this meditation, as finding himself utterly unable to enter into the same. He that knoweth, it should be performed (it may be) is sometime grieved for the omitting of it: but if the mind be impotent, as having lost her former strength for the time, it is constrained to yield to the omitting of it. Now for the redress of this, I answer, if he who omitteth it thus, through the untowardness of his heart, and unfitness to good duties, be such an one as hath learned and resolved to serve God every day, he can the more hardly bear this disorderedness of the mind, and therefore he will seek more speedily to have it remedied: But if he hath not yet obtained any such government of himself, but doth duty to God more generally, seldom, and uncertainly, it must needs be the more hardly redressed: for it is manifest, that such an one hath given his mind more liberty to wander in the world from the Christian course.

The remedy to both, as they can receive it, is one and the same; although not to both alike easy: yet seeing they are both the Lord's, let them bring their minds to these considerations, and say with themselves, I have received a mind to please God, to be teachable and ready to any duty: I have opposed myself against mine own will, and the devils secret and malicious counsel, though sweet to the flesh: I am not a debtor unto it: how can I then yield to this untowardness of my heart, and so sin against my God? Where are the manifold and comfortable privileges, which he hath given me, that I might be faithful to him? Am I weary of my peace, and do I haste

after mine own sorrow? Lord therefore bring back this ranging heart of mine from the deceitful dreams, or fears, or doubts that it hath been snared in: and restore it to the liberty which it was wont to enjoy, that is, to solace itself in thy favor, and communion with thee, and to count it my greatest happiness to commune with thee, when I may. And this gift being decayed, through mine own fault, and Satan's cruelty and subtlety, restore again unto me, and forgive my weak love towards thee, who have provoked thy majesty, (if thou wouldest be provoked) to frown and look amiably on me no more.

Thou Lord chargest me, thus to seek thy face, even thy sweet presence, which I have gone from, and for a time been blinded, as having no ability to muse of any good things, and have not seen that I was seduced, till I perceived that I had lost this sweet liberty: now therefore (O Lord) show thy loving kindness in my distress and weakness, and restore to me this liberty of my mind, which many of thy children do find.

Thus fall into consideration with thyself, and discourage not thyself, who hast learned to use all thy wants to humble thee, and to bring thee nearer to God, rather than to go further from him: So that I conclude, that the remedy to such a one, as through an unsettled heart, cannot meditate of any parts of Christianity and godliness, having otherwise knowledge; yea the best remedy is to meditate of his present unfitness, looseness of heart and earthly mindedness, to count it as an heavy burden, to accuse his heart, and so to bring it to relenting, by considering how far off it is presently from that mildness, humbleness, heavenliness, and readiness unto duty, which have been in him at some other times. But let no man give any liberty in any sort to his evil heart (when it is turned away from cheerfulness and willingness in any part of God's service to go forward therein) for

that were to bring him into utter bondage. And this for redress of the second let.

The third followeth, and that is want of opportunity, and leisure, by reason of necessary business taking up the time: unto the which may be added this, that there is no convenient place to some, wherein they may go apart from company, as the sea-men, or such as must go far from their dwellings, when they should use it, as having neither choice of room, and yet the same taken up with children, and stirring up and down within, and compassed round with other houses adjoining without, as in small and poor families it is to be seen. To them which allege that they are hindered by necessary business, I deny not, but such may, and do fall out sometimes, especially to persons who are occupied about many things: whom I exhort, to weigh (as it behooveth all such to whom this belongeth) that one thing is necessary: and that the ordinary works of their callings are not to put this duty out of place: for if they do, it is by the unskillfulness, or untowardness of them who commit this fault: but the one of them is appointed of God to go with the other, and both of them to stand together to the upholding of their inward peace. And if they say, that their hindrance is not thereby, but by works more than ordinary, I further beseech them by the mercifulness of God, that they seek not cloaks for their sloth; neither hold themselves back from so profitable duties, by occasions of no great weight or importance, but rather for yielding to the flesh. I call those businesses, occasions of great weight, when the omitting of them, although they be but household, or worldly affairs; yet may trouble them more at that time, then the omitting of their meditation, which may be performed another time, but their businesses cannot: As it cometh oft to pass, that the neglecting of necessary work, through want of discretion, and heed taking, when it should be done (although in the meanwhile, prayer, reading, meditation, or such like

be gone about) troubleth the mind (I say) with so deep grief, through some great discommodity sustained, that in long space it is not quiet and at liberty to serve God any way again. And seeing God requireth to be honored of us in all things, even in these earthly, as well as spiritual, therefore we must not think, it pleaseth him when any man shall through zeal without knowledge, do that at one time, which shall quench zeal for want of wise heed taking, for many times after: but if any man will hereby let loose y e bridle anything the more to worldliness, let him know, that he hath from hence no such liberty.

Now to return, if any through necessary lets shall be constrained to let pass this duty of meditation, hereby let it appear to have been necessary, and without his fault, if he supply this duty after his necessary labor ended, and take heed that in no wise it be omitted altogether, unless he can be assured with peace, that God in the omitting of it hath been remembered some other way. And so I say of the hindrance, which cometh by want of convenient place, that must be done which may most conveniently, seeing there is nothing gained by neglecting that duty, in the doing whereof standeth our peace and welfare. And thus much of the lets which hinder altogether from meditating about our estate, that we may be the fitter thereby unto prayer and good life.

The other lets are such as hinder us from the good and profitable use of it, when we break through the three former, and these may rightly be called abuses of it: and are two, which in few words I set down thus. The first is a commonness or customariness in it, when we through persuasion that it must be continued, do it hoverly and slightly, and so make a ceremony of it, not so much looking how our hearts are well affected in and by it, as that we may not be justly charged for omitting it. Which sin is easily and soon committed in private prayer also, and such like good exercises, when our minds are

not holden with a taking delight in them: and hereof it is, that all the serving and worshipping of God is with the most, but only for fashion: of all which it is said by God in the Prophet; In vain do they worship me.

The second is when, although we be desirous to use it, and that for our help and edifying, yet our heads are so full of trifling and wandering phantasies, or worldly matters, that we cannot mind those heavenly things, which are so contrary to them: And from hence ariseth a weariness of it, and a hastening to more liberty, that our hearts may range where they list, which is that which they most of all desire. And although through the very corruption of nature, the best of God's children do complain, that they do not the good they would, and therefore not this good sometimes (notwithstanding they mislike that it should be so, and resist it:) yet the especial cause of this unsavory, wearisome, and untoward taking in hand, or setting upon so holy and heavenly a part of God's worship, is another besides this: that is to say, the letting loose of our hearts all the day (as I have had occasion to say in another place) disorderedly, without watching over them, and calling them back from such endless roving's; that they may not forget God, but be held within holy compass, wheresoever we become, or whatsoever we go about: for there must not be in us at any time an evil heart.

Even this (I say) is the cause why we cannot have our hearts at commandment in meditation and prayer to attend upon God reverently, when we would. For when we have at our pleasure given them scope through the day to fasten their liking where they have desire, it hath been hard for us to wean them from it, when we would. And whiles we will be at this point, it will never be better with us in our meditation: no although God hath appointed the same to be an especial help to the well framing of our lives, and that our minds

be brought into an heavenly estate thereby, if we would frequent it: yea although we appoint some especial time thereunto, yet shall we be turned from musing on good things to wandering, and shall hardly fasten on any good matter, having yet certain principal points concerning our estate to set us on work therein; so many trifling phantasies and dreams shall swim in our brain to hold out better.

And till these by little and little be dried up with the flame of heavenly and fervent affections, usually possessing our hearts in stead of them, it will never be otherwise with us but worse and worse. And it is a thing to be wondered at, that seeing none of our actions any day can be well done when our hearts are not good, and so preserved and kept (which without circumspect care and watch over them cannot be) it may be wondered at (I say) that we should yet be secure and negligent about the keeping of them from such danger to ourselves and others, as we know will thereby ensue.

Therefore as the Lord by his Prophets hath cried out against the people in sundry ages, that they perished because they would not understand, nor at all consider their estate, and as there shall be an end of their deceivable delights, although they cannot be brought to think of their end and account: so he speaketh as plainly, and hath done from time to time of this, that although in the world we shall have tribulation, even we whom God hath chosen out of the world; yet seeing we are strangers here, we cannot neither may we place our hearts delight and felicity here, but our chiefest comfort must be to have daily communion with God, and to have our conversation in heaven, with him, (unto the which, meditation is a singular help) and what weighty matters soever we be busied about, yet to remember our maker in them all, that he be pleased and trusted in of us.

And in that many, even of God's servants do (through their corrupt nature) loath this heavenly Manna (I mean to be oft and daily in musing on the things which concern their peace) and have their teeth set on edge with the deceitful pleasures of worldly men, who know no better: even this (I say) though there were no other thing, doth cause, that they enjoy not the tenth part of the privileges and liberties which God hath provided for them in this their pilgrimage. Neither can anything (if it be weighed) be less tolerable in the sight of almighty God, then whereas he hath given us his Scriptures, which tell us his mind, and therefore teach us how we may commune with his majesty, and for our behoove, hath given us an earnest charge to ponder them in our heart, to have them in mind, to make them the matter of our cogitation, delight, talk, and practice; yet that Christians of good hope should not be better acquainted with this heavenly course, nor be occupied thus, but by fits, very seldom and coldly, as if God had been earnest with us about a trifle, or as though he had offered us great injury to move us thereunto.

So that although I cannot say, it is no part of their thought, which should season all their thoughts (as I may say of many lying protestants, who do shun and fly all consideration of heavenly matters, lest they should trouble and disquiet them:) yet it is too manifest that they savor too slenderly of God's presence and company; who shun it, by being strangers to this meditation, whereby they may have fellowship and company with him.

Therefore to remedy this trifling out the time when we go about to meditate and pray privately, and to obtain that we may be fit to perform this duty, and not be carried at that time after wandering, we must remove that which hindereth us from it: I mean we must tie up our loose hearts throughout the day from their deadly custom of ranging after vain, fond, and deceivable thoughts, dreams and

delights: we must weigh how little worth this is, to have our cogitations fastened upon things transitory, much less about those which are filthy, but rather bring them to be taken up in those which are heavenly. This we are called unto: and until we can learn to do thus, that how weighty soever our dealings be, yet we count this the chiefest to keep peace with God, and ever fear to offend him: it will be a hard matter to bring ourselves to meditate, and pray with cheerfulness and fruit.

Now that I have set down the necessity and profit of meditation, whensoever we list to use it, and the especial lets thereof, I will now in that which followeth, only help the reader with some rules to guide himself the better herein, until it be more familiar unto him (and then he shall use it better than all rules shall teach him) and I will set down with the same, some examples in particular meditations, which shall agree with every good mind which readeth them: that such as be not yet able to help themselves by entering into their own estate and heart, nor to draw matter from their own experience to meditate on, may learn by this which I write and such like; and others that can, may yet when they be unfit by troubles and other occasions, help themselves by these examples which I shall propound to them. Only there is required teachableness and diligence to consider of them, and profit by them, and that whatsoever be hard to them, they would crave the help of such as can resolve them. As concerning the rules, I have had occasion in other respects to make mention of some of them, but not so, as the reader may easily gather them as rules. Here therefore I will set them down together.

The first is, that he, who desireth to have help by meditation, do weigh how slippery, fickle, bad, and wandering his heart is infinite ways, to his exceeding hurt; and that he must of necessity appoint some set time, to check, reclaim, and wean it from the same.



The second, that he watch over his heart (having been so oft deceived by it) throughout his whole life, and have it in suspicion, that so it may be more fit to be drawn to such heavenly exercises, and be stayed therein, and attend unto the same.

This being observed, let him (if he be able) draw matter of meditation and prayer from his own wants and infirmities; from God's benefits; from the changes and mortality of this life. I have before set down, what he should chiefly meditate upon: of love, humility, meekness, peace of conscience, the glory of God's kingdom, his love, and the contrary: but especially of that which for the present time, shall be most available.

If he cannot thus do, let him read before, some part of the hundred and nineteen Psalm: some of the epistles of the Apostles: Christ's sermons, or some part of this direction, or some meditations, which follow, so many as conveniently he may, or any good matter fit for this purpose to season and well affect his mind: that so he may learn how to perform this duty, and quicken up himself to it oft and from time to time, when he once knoweth how. If he cannot read, he must desire more help of others: and for want of help, he must needs look to go the more slowly forward, either in the right, and kind use of meditation, or in any part of sound godliness, and Christianity: seeing we cannot be ignorant of this, that the old subtle fowler sets his snares and nets so thick in our way, that we have no shift, but to fall into them, and light upon them, except with the wings of meditation and prayer we mount up on high above them, and fly over them.

Now follow the examples or particular meditations, which I thought good to adjoin to that which hath been said of this matter, to teach the ignorant; and to help even the stronger Christians, when they be

not so fit to help themselves; and never out of season or unprofitable to either of both: I set some of them down more briefly, that they may give occasion to the persons when they are fittest for brevity, to discourse of the matters contained in them (seeing they be such as shall ever concern them) and apply them to their own estate more at large to move their hearts to practice them. I set down some of them more largely and fully, that such as feel themselves more barren and unable to call to mind such good things, as they would be glad sometime to think on, may with less trouble be satisfied, while they shall need no more but to read them (so many of them at one time as may be fit to move their affections) and then to consider of them, and examine themselves by them, whether they be with them, or against them, that the end thereof may be peace to them by their readiness always to yield to that which they ought. I have not set down too few, least they should soon grow too common; nor too many, least they should be too tedious, seeing the book it self is large, and they serve not only for meditation, but also to help the practice of the whole book. This I thought good to say about this thing.

But consider and be resolved of this one thing, that thou must nourish and hold fast a love and liking of this duty: so that when thou art barren and unprofitable in thine own sense and feeling, yet thou mayst then be willing to be well seasoned by it, and restored to thy former grace again. For if thou beest not so affected, thou shalt find no savor in it, as neither in any other good help whatsoever: seeing to him, that is full, a honey comb is not sweet. And though I set down the points that thou shouldest meditate on in sentences not applied to thee: thou must apply that which is set down generally to all Christians, to thyself, as if it were spoken only to thee. As thus for example, if thou wouldest meditate on this point (The Lord is all in all, and who is like unto him:) think after this, or the like manner, in applying it to thyself: O Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee? And

whom do I desire on earth in comparison of thee? For thou art my portion and my joy, of whom I make my songs even in the night season: I sigh to be unburdened, and desire to be dissolved, and be with thee: Oh when shall I come into thy glorious presence? &c. And so draw all other holy sentences to thy behoove and use. If thou wouldest meditate on this point, because of men's wandering and inconstant profession of the Gospel without fruit; it is both wisdom and our happiness to rejoice in our own going forward, not in other men's: and in proving ourselves, we may rejoice in ourselves, not in other, Gal. 6:4. Lift up thine heart to God, and pray him, that it may be so with thee. And so proceed the rest as they follow thus:

No man shall be fit to govern himself aright before men, if he do not usually acquaint himself with, and frame himself after that Christian course, first before God.

No man can rest in his private meditations and prayers before God, if a well-ordered life, as a fruit thereof, appear not before men.

When a man looketh so diligently to the several parts of his life and calling, that he may have peace thereby, it is well.

It is a point of Christian wisdom, to be most circumspect and best armed, where we be weakest.

It is no way tolerable to lie still, if a man be fallen, Jer. 8:6, but to have recourse to God again, if we be overtaken; though with much ado we obtain it, Exod. 33:8.

Although in a well-ordered course, all crosses and incumbrances be not utterly removed: yet many by it are avoided, and others profitably sustained, Prov. 19:23.

It is some grace to use prosperity well, that is, that a man may cheerfully and fruitfully pass his time: but if we be void of this under the cross, we may gather, that the benefits of God make us merry, and not our resting in this favor of God.

It is a good thing to rejoice in our Sabbaths, and communion with God's people: but so, as we rest not even in them, but in this, that God is our portion in all estates and places. Psal. 119:57, 2. Cor. 5:16

When many earthly troubles take hold of us at once, we must carry ourselves very soberly and graciously, if we be not unsettled from willingness to duty by some of them: Frowardness, impatience and forgetting ourselves being so ready, by the smallest occasions, to break out of us.

We seldom enjoy commodity, when we doubt of the lawfulness or conveniency of keeping or coming by it, but the Lord maketh it as sour and discommodious in the end.

We seldom have in great price anything below, as house, land, &c. but the Lord crosseth us some way in it, that we may love it with measure.

Rejoice not at the first hearing of heavenly things only; but more soundly continue it, when thou knowest them more soundly and better by experience.

Prepare and look for affliction before it come, least thou be besotted with thy peace and prosperity: and also, that the burden of trouble may be easier when it cometh.

In the midst of tribulation (because that easily oppresseth) think of the best privileges which thou hast, that is, Christ with all that

cometh with him. 1. Sam. 30:6, David, and Psal. 77.

The greater thy troubles are, the greater must thy strength be, and the more godly must thou be.

When thy heart can rest in God, and the pleasures which come thereby, take in hand all thine affairs soberly, that thy joy be not quenched thereby. It would make one wonder to see, how by such occasions the heart is unsettled.

Deadness of spirit, loggish unprofitableness (if not wound) take hold of a man, when he doth not faithfully make up any breaches made in his conscience, by true returning to God.

The Lord is not far off from us, nor hard to be entreated, when after any fall or escape we turn to him in humility and repentance. 1. Sam. 7:10, and 12:22.

Of the manifold vexations that fall into our lives, we may observe that the most of them do become annoyances to us, through our own fault: that we either prevent them not when we may, or bear them not as we ought, or make not use of them as we might do.

The talking of the commodities of this life is so savory and sweet to flesh, that being in it, we hardly get out of it, no not when better things are in speech before.

When our callings become a pleasure to us, to discharge them faithfully for the Lord's sake, what outward helps of blessing soever God sendeth us, they shall make our lives so much the more easy and comfortable: but these without the other are but deceivable vanities.

The place wherein Christ used to pray often, and had found much comfort, in the same he was taken and betrayed; but yet he

continued his godly custom even till he was led away: so must we look to have our best places of prayer and walks, made traps for us: for the subtlety of the world know our haunt, and where to find us. But let us persevere, that if we be taken even there, we may rejoice: as being found well occupied when the Lord shall come.

Although for want of proof, we count all afflictions hard; yet when we have experience (Heb. 5:13,14.) and have been exercised in bearing them, and see that the fear is more than the thing itself; our confidence in God will make them easy, when our cause is good: But yet by degrees, that is, when we can first bear sharp words and fiery contentions of men, after stripes, imprisonment, and so death. As Moses, Exod. 3:11, compared with chap. 10:25,26, and the Apostles, Act. 5:41.

When matters of more importance than our salvation is, fall into our hands, let us be occupied in them with more fervency, then in that: but if there be no such, why should we more earnestly look after them? And why should not that be with greatest delight wrought on, and looked after?

How can we say, we love the Lord, when we be not ever willing to go home to him, and in the mean while to be as near him in all communion, as we may?

Christianity and practice of godliness is compared to a rich and gainful trade (Prov. 3:14.) wherein little profit cometh in, except it be well followed, and diligence used in it, and one thing not letted nor slacked for another.

To have a willing mind to be well occupied, and matter about which we may, and time to bestow therein, and freedom from lets therefrom, is an estate much to be made of; and yet for the most part,

they who have almost all outward encouragements, cannot tell what to do with them.

Whereas the very name of death is fearful, when men hear that they must be ready to suffer for the Gospel (and therefore many are dismayed) we must know that we are the more unwilling to hear of it, because we accustom ourselves to love this world, and our life here, too well; which must be less set by. And God, by diseases, and the miserable estate of things in this world, and by many other means, can make our lives loathsome and death welcome: which if we would think much of, the hearing of it would be more welcome. But begin in time, lest it be too late, when we can stay here no longer.

It is needful, besides our set times of prayer in the day, to have oft recourse to God by watchfulness and prayer, in all our dealings; lest we go too far in surfeiting our hearts with them, and (as we can) to look to God secretly, though not so solemnly as at other times, praying him to keep us. Neh. 2:4.

Whatsoever taste of good things we have gotten, and how sweet soever they seem; yet it is certain, that God hath yet much more than we can think of, if they be the matters which we have in greatest price: but being set light by, and the means neglected which preserve them, they die.

That estate is to be made much of, wherein we are not only delighted in serving God by the duties we do presently; but also as joyful to think of them which are to come, and the more, the better they be.

It is a singular mercy, that we take comfort and delight in the things which we hope for, and in the service of God; which to the world are most irksome and tedious.

The more sure of God's favor thou art by faith, the more humble also thou art, and not contrarily, Matth. 15:27.

They are worthy of great punishment, who set light by the plenty of that grace, the crumbs whereof God's hungry servants do set great store by.

What is more lively to our understanding then the heavenly and spiritual course of a Christian, in comfort and godliness, throughout the Scriptures; as Rom. 5:4,5? And what is more unlike it, then the lives of men?

One especial point of profiting, is, to know our own vileness and misery better daily, that so we may come to know the inestimable bounty of God, and what we are beholding to him, for receiving increase from him in pardon and other graces.

As excess of eating and drinking do bring sloth and sleep: so surfeiting our souls in pleasures, cares, &c. rocketh us asleep, and maketh us unwilling and unfit to see what is amiss. In steed whereof, sobriety, that is, a ruling of our passions, and watchfulness are to be our daily companions. 1. Peter 5:7, Psal. 5:8.

We must not flatter and deceive ourselves with the calling to mind of the forwardness and care that hath been in us in times past, hereby to gather sloth unto the flesh, which is ready to take the smallest occasions that may be to favor itself, and to make us grow cold and slack in duties: but we are to look to continue and increase any good and forwardness (which hath been) for hereafter: as to delight more in walking with God in a Christian course, and to hold fast our faith and comfort even in trouble, and not to think our state the worse for it. But with our Savior to despise the shame of the cross, although it



be even to the thrusting of us out of the world: and therefore much more in prosperity, to be fruitful in all good works. John. 15:8.

Seeing it pleaseth the Lord to let us know, that we have this precious and blessed liberty, all the day long to be with him, to enjoy his presence by faith, to solace ourselves in bold affiance in him, and that for all good things; and to be free from the fear, terror and anguish, which hunteth the ungodly: It were pity that we should, for some deceivable folly, deprive ourselves of such sound happiness and peace, as he alloweth us, even here, to be partakers of.

When men receive not the word with meekness, that it may be engrafted in them, Jam. 1:21, and do not so hear, that they may believe (Act. 14:1.) but take a taste and a liking, at the most: I deny not, but for some cause, one may hold out longer than another: but if they go not forward, ye shall see them fall unto nothing: for a momentary and weak desire is not enough to hold up a godly life, but a delight in it, which faith worketh.

When we are afflicted, and the wicked spared, our state seemeth to them most vile. When we are both in prosperity, they seem more happy, then we. When they and we be both afflicted, they count our state happier than their own: But especially when they are afflicted, and we spared, Exod. 14:25.

We may not assign the Lord in what place, state, condition, or in what company we would live, but as strangers wait on him, even as the hand-maid on her mistress, for whatsoever he will allow us. And when great afflictions come, yet not to be discomforted, nor unquiet, but cheerful still through hope, as may be obtained of us, as we were in prosperity, least we should declare, that we serve God for our belly and ease: and seeing our God is never changed in any sort, we not to change.

We are ready most commonly to be called away by death, before we be fit, or have learned how to live.

Look what care, conscience, zeal thou haddest, when thou first embracedst the Gospel, what reverent admiration at the excellency of it, and what love towards it; the same at least retain, and be sure thou keepest still afterwards. And howsoever thy heart was weaned from the inordinate love of the world, and vain delights, which might quench those which are spiritual: see that the longer thou livest in this vale of misery, thou doest not drink up the draff of it, and fashion thyself after the iniquity of it: nor the more knowledge thou hast, that thou beest not the more secure. For thus it is with many at this day, who therefore do smart for it.

If a man be a diligent observer of his course of life, he shall seldom find himself free from all kinds of offenses, but one shall trouble him much, if another be weakened; yea and without much faithfulness and strength of grace shall prevail against him. But if there be care, that they weigh not down the affections in being too much taken up of them, it is well: for the Christian man's life is a continual battle, and when it ceaseth, we are ready on the left hand, or on the right to fall to evil and danger.

As we are subtle to beguile ourselves, so we do especially in this one thing, that where we either are perceived easily, when we be out of the way, or be afraid of ill report; there we can frame ourselves to sobriety, and to the keeping of measure in our lives: which is no sure token of peace and safety to our hearts, though for the present time we avoid offense. But where we are daily conversant, and therefore shall have more occasions to run into some trespass (especially with our inferiors, before whom we think we should not regard how

loosely we behave ourselves) there we look not so carefully to ourselves, which should most chiefly be don of us.

By this, that we see that grace is given to a Christian at his first conversion, to have victory, and to get strength over great sins, long delighted in; it appeareth how they abuse grace, who have long been counted the Lord's people; when they many years after, do yield and give over themselves to sudden and weaker temptations, and are easilier overcome of them, though they have less force in them.

Learn to know the precioucest liberties, though there be many lawful.

It is wonderful, that a man knowing that he shall not enjoy the grace now that he had twenty years agone, except he be as careful to keep it, as he was then to come by it: yet that men shall be so loath to strive for it by such holy endeavor of hearty prayer, when they wax weak: and though they be resolved never to offend in the reproachfullest sort; yet that they love to linger after the same in affection and desire, which neither they can have without unutterable woe, neither dare set their minds to enjoy, though they might.

Keep down carnal liberty, and thy spiritual liberty shall be great; and rest on God, and it shall make thee overcome the hardest things.

No man can live long and comfortably, as Psalm. 34:12,13, unless he fly from evil and do good, and that betimes, Eccles. 12:1, and why not? Seeing heathen men got learning and friends in their youth, that the waywardness and tediousness of their old age might be mitigated.

Seeing in age we are awaked by the least voice of a bird: and yet take no pleasure in the sweetest noise of the musical instruments: By the

first we learn to be partakers of that rest and Sabbath which belongeth to the people of God; from the which, God commandeth in the Canticles, that we be not awaked. By the other we are to learn, that being washed and well refreshed with the wine of the holy Ghost, we may sing to God cheerfully, and when we cannot hear others sing we may hear ourselves, and be delighted therein.

That we must remember God, walk with him, and serve him by days and not by weeks, and months only: that proveth Psalm. 90:12. Teach me to number my days: where he sets himself to it by days and daily.

The godly may do that with delight, which is tedious and wearisome to the wicked, that is, to walk with God at large and at liberty, Psalm. 119:45, and take pleasure in good things, whereby they may avoid many troubles utterly which would oppress them: seeing the greatest sins bring the greatest sorrows: and such afflictions as God shall send may be easilier borne of them, when the other shall rage and turmoil themselves, Lam. 3:39.

Such variety of good things is in God's word, that we may have by the meditation thereof, good provision to keep our lives from shameful evils: and though by Satan we should be turned away; yet by our knowledge and experience we may return (who else can?) and when we cannot do good, yet we may keep from evil.

While we have peace in the land, we are at variance in our towns and houses: and when we have all, we are oft times not at peace with God.

Husbandmen long for their fruits; but we do not so, for that which we pray for: whereas we should wait for that which we pray and hope

for, and so we should be joyful when we obtain it. For if we be beloved of God, then we may look for any good.

If we can rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, then are we Christ's friends; and therefore dear unto him, Luk. 15:6.

If all stolen liberty cost men as dear, as roving fancies do some, they would make small haste after them, Psalm. 51:4.11.

Few do make due reckoning of the benefits which they presently enjoy, but are ever discontentedly gaping after new: but when they be taken from them, then they see what they once had, Lam. 1:7.

Never better liking in health and bodily welfare, then when we are most heavenly minded.

In this time of hardness of heart which is in the greatest number, and this spirit of slumbering, this is to be most lamented: that there are few to lay it to heart, and mourn for it; but senseless, or taking part with them.

Seeing the most find no savor in prayer, and yet the Scripture chargeth us never to be weary of it, know that there is precious fruit of it: and that is, when we praying in faith and repentance are answered from God; that we are heard either in assuring us of benefit, or helping us against sin: both which when after prayer we believe more strongly, we are well satisfied, and comforted, Joh. 16:24, therefore pray often.

Many professors do not only drown themselves in the world, but also when they come in company, they poison others, with casting the smoke of their naughty hearts upon others: so far off are they from checking themselves, for any of their sins.

There is no just cause of doubting of God's favor, by our outward afflictions, or our inward infirmities (both which yet do often cause us to doubt) but by sin, which we willingly commit, and lie in: and it is just with God, to have it so, as in Peter, Luk. 22:62.

When we are well humbled, God will cease to afflict, Matth. 11:29. Let the desire of them, who think they have it aright, be sound, that it may begin well: secondly, fervent, that it may grow: and constant, that it may continue; then it shall seek for reconciliation with God: which in a touched and humbled heart is a sign of faith; and will after grow to greater strength, for the hungry desire after grace is a sanctified affection; yet hath the wicked no whit to think his state good, fleshed for all this: for they have only flitting desires to do good which come to nothing; but the other hath reformation of life with it.

Let outward afflictions the greater they be, as losses, disgrace, diminish the infirmities which are inward of the mind (as impatience, and rebelliousness of heart) not increase them.

Before sin be committed we extenuate it as Esau; after it is committed, we contrarily aggravate it, as Judas. For the devil comes first as a tempter; after, as an accuser.

We shall never want somewhat to exercise us, sin, or trouble: neither were it profitable for us, to the end we may be ever in combat.

Though we do a good thing, yet if it be not in knowledge, it is sin, John. 13:17.

No good thing abideth long with us in his strength, and beauty, without new quickening: yea quailing and deadness sometime groweth upon us, what means soever we use.

We cannot rest in any estate, how prosperous soever, except we see the Lord go with us to guide us.

We should not suffer ourselves to be carried from the best things, whatsoever weighty dealings or matters be in hand: and having been employed in God's business, in living fruitfully and cheerfully among men, we should be loath now to faint and change our course.

When we feel any weariness in a godly course, by what occasion soever it be, the devil hath met with us. Complain therefore and relent we, for our unkindness, and wandering from God, and he will be found, and return right soon. Hos. 4:3. Cant. 3:3.

It is well proved, that faith and godliness are the upholders of our joy and peace, Rom. 5:16, and 2. Cor. 1:12, and that they make a hard estate easy; and a prosperous, fruitful. 2. Cor. 6:10, Act. 9:31.

Among many reasons to move us to go under afflictions meekly, these are two. Think that God will exercise and frame us: for hard times (Lam. 3:27.) and perhaps an end of our days, is at hand. Matth. 24:39.

God is not only the same to us in afflictions, that he hath been, but will be felt more sweet, when the world becometh more bitter.

That seeking of ease, profit or pleasure, ought to be restrained, which holdeth from seeking the common good of others.

We may observe, that when our Christian state is at the best, it is no better than it had need to be: but when we consider how many ways we might decline, we may thank God it is no worse.

Hardly is a good Christian brought to give over many vain liberties, some he will, but not others: but after his excursions from God, he

hath much ado to return into a good course again. This causeth much uncheerfulness in the life: and till we cleave to him with delight to serve him, it will never be otherwise.

A great difference there is, betwixt the continual observing and viewing of our life from day today, and the doing of it by fits now and then: in the one we are safe, cheerful, and fruitful: in the other, rash, offensive, and after unquiet for it, walking in fear and with little comfort.

If thou wilt find Christ sweet, thou must ever find sin sour.

If thou wouldest forgo thy riches willingly, and readily; use and enjoy them soberly and moderately: set little by them, and lose little.

It is to be feared, that many professing the Gospel with some liking, do only generally aim at godliness, and therefore they have many unsettling's and ranging's out: but they do not particularly look to themselves; therefore they gather not experience, nor find any great fruit of it.

Fear ever to offend God, and thou needest fear no other peril: as ill tidings, Psal. 112:7, Exod. 20:20, for he keepeth thee, Psal. 32:7, and 91:11.

It is strange, that we having no good part in our life, but through the well framing of our hearts; yet that we should think it much to keep them in compass, Prov. 4:23.

They who can neglect, and set meanly by a little vain glory and credit with men, may gain and enjoy much peace with God.

A man by God's spirit shall do a thing well, which another without it shall do very ill: Josh. 6:4, compared with 1. Sam. 4:4.



Look not to tie God to thee in thy need, who regardest not him in thy ease. 1. Sam. 4:5.

They are rare men, who are not led by their passions into extremities, seeing they are rare, who so look to themselves, that they may keep from extremities, 1. Sam. 4:5,6.

Many at their death hold that they ought to be godly: but is it not good at one time, which is at another?

He is a rare person, who is in favor with God, when he afflicteth, Psal. 2:12, and he oft afflicteth; because we should believe that he will deliver us.

It is folly, yea madness, to be heavy to death for any earthly thing, when yet a man desires nothing more than life.

All our life ought to be a providing for a good end: and a keeping away of woe by sin, which few will do (for they will not lose an inch of their liberty) and yet but for this what were the life of God's people?

When the Scripture telleth us of the happiness of the Church, as Psalm. 89:11, and 87:3, we may think we come short very much, when we esteem not our estate better than the best of the world.

If we would ever through the day be at peace with God, and know we are pardoned, we must be ever ready to remove our sins, which raise a controversy betwixt us.

We would willingly please ourselves in some unlawful liberties, when we have pleased God in some duties. But a wise man will keep well, while he is well, and not trouble himself with an ill conscience, when God doth not trouble him with hard afflictions, seeing it is written (Hebr. 3:12, and 1. Cor. 10:31.) whether we eat, we see many fall

fearfully and offend, but few return again: therefore it is to be feared, that many perish, or at least are in great danger.

The more grace we perceive in any man and constancy, and the more he is like to God, the better we ought to love him, as Christ did John, and contrariwise, John. 13:23. Psal. 15:4.

This is a worthy thing: when in fear of, or by great afflictions, our innocence and repentance is so sound, that we have bold confidence to claim God's promise of help in the time of need, and are upholden by it from the strength of fear, till we see an issue, as Israel did in fear: read 1. Sam. 7:8,10,11.

Where there is willfulness in sinning, there is great difficulty in relenting: as also no power nor boldness in believing.

As for such as count it more then needeth to seek and to make chief reckoning of godliness, let them learn what these Scriptures mean: are they not for use? Psalm. 87:3, and 84:11,12. One day in thy house (O God) is better than a thousand elsewhere: And Psalm. 4:8. Try out therefore the truth of them.

When we become to the highest degree of serving God with much travail, yet we abide hardly and a short time therein: at least much unprofitableness and barrenness will meet with us again after, even by means of our corrupt hearts: which being so, we need not think that we be too forward, when we be at the best.

Many beginning well in godliness, have fainted and quailed, or been justly reproached before their end, that others may the more fear their own weakness.

When petty troubles arise in families and other ways, we should stay ourselves thus: These are small, in comparison: and I must look for greater. Heb. 13:5, and 12:4.

The careful observation of our hearts and ways, is an especial mean to keep us from evil, and to see our infirmities better, that we may bow to God and obtain pardon of them.

Where new knowledge is not sought, there is the less savor in, and use of the old: and when men make not good use of the old, the seeking of new is but novelty.

Seeing the conscience is so tender, and so soon pricked, a man would marvel how they do, who make many breaches therein, and solder them up slenderly and easily.

Men having experience of Satan's malice and continual dogging them to evil, it should teach them to trust better to their armor, and less to themselves.

Dispose thy outward affairs with wisdom, and so as thou spend not overmuch time about the same, when thou mayest do it in a little: whether it be in company by talking thereof (for commonly when we enter talk thereof once, we cannot tell when to make an end:) or whether it be alone by ourselves in consulting; for thoughts of the world do tickle us: and that may be determined in a few sentences, and in a part of an hour, which may hold us work the most part of a day, yea many.

If any of God's children will wax bold against the Lord and break forth to seek liberty amiss, he shall surely smart for it. Psal. 89:31. If mine own children break my laws and keep not my commandments, I will punish their sins with the rod, and their offenses with the

scourge. And if they sin openly against their conscience, they shall one time or other, and one way or other, come to smart for it openly: As Josiah, 2. Chron. 35:22,23.

God afflicteth sometime to correct pride, least we should be lifted up above measure, 2. Cor. 12:7, and sometime to instruct us and make us wise in our course, and constant as we were not before, Psal. 119, and so to be wiser and afraid to offend. Psal. 119.

Men have never too much wealth, but the more is ever welcome: Why should not we do the like in spiritual things, even whosoever hath most (1. Cor. 14:1.) and greatest part therein? For a while, we find sweet savor in an holy estate oft times: but the strength of fervent desire is soon cooled many ways, namely by fear of outward troubles, and losses, &c. for if that take hold once, it eateth deeply.

It is too clear, that many professors do but aim at a godly life, and therefore they are soon unsettled when they be at the best: and gather not experience for the time to come to be directed.

Where we suspect that conceits grow, if we go not about to pull them up, they will be too deeply fastened in a short time.

Though a man pray and meditate and keep a better course in his life then some do; yet if he do it but slightly, that the flesh prevaieth much in hindering the well performing of it, all will soon come to naught, it may be perceived by the sway it beareth in other parts of life; and then let it be speedily amended.

It is good so to task ourselves with duties, one or other at all times and in all places, that so doing we may cut off occasions of much sin.

Let no sin be slightly passed over or committed: For when it cometh to remembrance in trouble, it will be an heavy burden, and pinch us to the heart.

Seeing in age our company will be tedious, and we shall be left alone without company, let us learn in our youth, to join the Lord to our company; and to have him our familiar: that we may be never less solitary, then when we are alone.

He that can sin freely, and give it no vent out again, by repentance, though he will not see, nor remove it; yet seeing he knoweth he must, Lam. 3:40, he shall not thrive nor prosper in God's family, nor taste of his dainties by faith.

Sundry necessary observations for a Christian, fit also to meditate upon.

1. That we keep a narrow watch over our hearts, words, and deeds continually.
2. That with all care the time be redeemed, which hath been idly, carelessly, and unprofitably spent.
3. That once in the day at the least private prayer and meditation be used.
4. That care be had to do, and receive good in company.
5. That our family be with diligence and regard instructed, watched over and governed.
6. That no more time or care be bestowed in matters of the world, then must needs.

7. That we stir up ourselves to liberality to God's Saints.
8. That we give not the least bridle to wandering lusts and affections.
9. That we prepare ourselves to bear the cross, by what means it shall please God to exercise us.
10. That we bestow sometime not only in mourning for our own sins, but also for the sins of the time and age wherein we live.
11. That we look daily for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, for our full deliverance out of this life.
12. That we use (as we shall have opportunity, at least as we shall have necessity) to acquaint ourselves with some godly and faithful person, with whom we may confer of our Christian estate, and open our doubts, to the quickening up of God's graces in us.
13. That we observe the departure of men our of this life, their mortality, the vanity and alteration of things below, the more to contemn the world, and to continue our longing after the life to come. And that we meditate and muse often of our own death, and going out of this life, how we must lie in the grave, all our glory put off; which will serve to beat down the pride of life that is in us.
14. That we read somewhat daily of the holy Scriptures, for the further increase of our knowledge, if it may be.
15. That we enter into covenant with the Lord to strive against all sin, and especially against the special sins and corruptions of our hearts and lives, wherein we have most dishonored the Lord, and have raised up most guiltiness to our own consciences, and that we carefully see our covenant be kept and continued.

16. That we mark how sin dieth and is weakened in us, and that we turn not to our old sins again, but wisely avoid all occasions to sin.

17. That we fall not from our first love, but continue still our affections to the liking of God's word, and all the holy exercises of religion diligently hearing it, and faithfully practicing the same in our lives and conversations: that we prepare ourselves before we come, and meditate and confer of that we hear, either by ourselves, or with other: and so mark our daily profiting in religion.

18. That we be often occupied in meditating on God's benefits and works, and sound forth his praises for the same.

19. That we exercise our faith by taking comfort and delight in the great benefit of our redemption by Christ, and the fruition of God's presence, in his glorious and blessed kingdom.

20. Lastly, that we make not these holy practices of repentance common in time, nor use them for course.

And these I have set down to help thee to meditate. And who sees not now, by that which hath been said, that a good heart may be able to meditate? That as the exercise itself is both very needful for all Christians, and many ways gainful, so none may have just cause to complain, that they cannot tell how to make use of it. But let us remember, that besides the benefit and gain of it, it is one of the private helps that God in his wise and merciful providence ordained for his dear children to make their life sweet and comfortable here, which otherwise would be irksome and painful, even to them who are best able to pass it well. And therefore to neglect it, shall not only be gross unthankfulness: but a charging of the Lord with a work merely needless. Let us also, for the better heartening of ourselves hereunto consider the uncertainty and shortness of our life, and the warnings

which God hath given us of our mortality, not only by the doctrine of his word and common experience, but more especially, within these few years, by taking from us so many worthy instruments of his glory, as I must needs say, if it be well weighed, will work in us a less desire to live, seeing they live not with us. And this, among all the rest of the vexations and molestations of this life, should whet and sharpen us to meditation, that we might the more shake off the burden and weight of the inordinate desire of living here, as boult from our heels.

But as it is too true, that the righteous perisheth, and no man almost considereth it, that they are taken away from the evils which shall meet with such as remain behind: so, who is meet to hear our Saviors words, weep for yourselves, and for your children? And therefore to muse and think deeply of it, that he may do it. So that meditation should be one with us, whatsoever should be the other: That it might not be verified in us, which was complained of by the Prophet Jeremiah: I stood and hearkened when God reprov'd the people's security, to see, if any would return; but there was none that said, what have I done? As if he should say, there was none, that pondered in his heart, how God was offended. Paul willed Timothy to meditate and thoroughly exercise and season his mind with the doctrine which he delivered to the people, even to be taken up of it, that both he himself might be thoroughly seasoned with the doctrine for every part of his life; and that he might feed his hearers the more plentifully.

But alas, how slightly is the Apostles admonition regarded of a number even in the ministry? Who, though some of them read much, and teach good things in their sermons, when they do preach: yet have they small use of their knowledge; neither deliver anything by their own meditation, more then they find in their commentaries;



whereas, if they did, they should draw abundant matter out of their private readings. Besides that, many receive whatsoever they find in their books, seeing they meditate not upon it: and so, as they can the less speak privately of the same things (which they deliver publicly) to the edifying and consolation of him, who demandeth a question of them, seeing they speak only out of the book: even so, they are the meanlier and more weakly furnished with the doctrine, which they teach, to make their lives fruitful, because they do not weigh the use, benefit, and necessity of the doctrine in their hearts: and this, beside other great inconveniences, causeth some to fill their sermons with authorities of men, to prove the truth of God: which is all one, as to set up a candle to give light at noon tide, and to prop and hold up a great and weighty building with a weak and slender pillar. So that this is justly to be complained of in the minister or people, if they be not acquainted with this meditation.

As for the objection of the one or the other, that they have the world to look after, and to care for (for this is the probablest defense that they have, for the omitting and neglecting of it) they should know it to be their sin, that they will thus set God against himself, as though he should command them to do that, which hindereth them from another duty commanded. Nay rather, they should think, that following of the world to be too much, which is not moderated and ordered by the due considering, how far, and in what manner they should deal in the world: that is, not to be hindered from holiness by it. If they be rich, they have the less cause to be holden from it, by worldly care. If they be poor, they have the more need of it, to moderate their care, that it exceed not, nor carry them to unbelief. For it must be remembered, that I speak of such, as say, they esteem most precious of the greatest riches, which is godliness. And what example so ever they have of the contrary in the multitude of worldlings, among whom they live; yet they must know, though

others will not, that they are not set here in their places, and callings, to do as loose and reckless servants, when they go to market: who when they should buy provision for their masters family, neglect that which they should chiefly intend, and fall to drinking, play, and other ill rule with their companions.

Neither should they be like bad husbands, who reckon what they have coming in, but not what must go out of their hands, who are not like to uphold their occupying long. But they must be like the wise builder, who looketh whether he be able to make an end, when he hath begun: So should they every while, be looking and wisely considering, whether they take the course to finish the building of their Christian life, even to the full perfecting of it, which is another manner building, then any made with hands. And he that will meditate on this seriously, and such other good things as further this, he shall not need to fear the fall of his building, but that it shall stand in all weathers, till he inherit a building made without hands, which is immortal. And he that loveth to smell on the sweet savors, more fragrant then Aaron's ointment, which in his Soliloquies with God and in his meditations he receiveth of him, even the sweet odors and graces of the spirit; he shall smell of God's presence in his talk, company, and dealings: which will testify, that he came from God. And especially on the Sabbath, when the whole day is appointed of God to it, and the like spiritual services (the word preached giving so gracious occasions:) that man shall be able to say, that meditation is a wonderful help to faith and a godly life.

## **CHAP. 7.**

Of the third private help, which is the armor of a Christian: and of the first three points of it.

The third private help is the armor, which was next mentioned among the rest. This being not so clearly understood, nor the use of it so well seen into, requireth a more full handling, then I purpose to use in the most of the rest. And this armor God in his mercy hath appointed to furnish the Christian soldier withal in his warfare, against all his spiritual enemies, that by the help thereof, and the other means in this treatise mentioned, he may be able to be directed aright from time to time, and keep a good course in his life, and beat back the strong and subtle assaults of the devil, that he be not led by, nor overcome of them, nor of the manifold bad passions and evil desires of his own heart, which otherwise will draw him continually after them. But before I proceed any further, I will set down the points, worthy to be learned and practiced in and about this armor, that the reader may see better how to make right use of it.

First therefore I will show what this armor is, and the chief parts of it. Secondly, that a Christian life cannot stand without it, nor be practiced of any, except he be armed, as God hath taught and appointed him to be. Thirdly, how it is gotten and come by, and how we should put it on. Fourthly, how we may, by the help of it, practice godliness from time to time, and be able to stand fast in our Christian course, and resist in the time of danger. By all which, God will make us able to live Christianly, which is to have our conversation in heaven with our God, as he requireth.

The whole complete armor therefore, is the spiritual furniture of the gifts and graces of the holy Ghost, by which, God doth deliver his from all adversary power, and bring them to the obedience of his will. I speak not here of those who are to be called, but who are effectually called already: and they by the help of this armor, do not only cast down strong holds of temptation, and overthrow imaginations, and every high thing which exalteth itself (in the

opinion of him that is tempted) against the knowledge of God: but also bring into subjection every evil thought in them, to the obedience of Christ. And this armor is that which is set down to the Ephesians, the parts whereof are these: Truth or sincerity; righteousness; the shoes of peace, or preparation to bear the cross; faith, the helmet of salvation: which in another place he calleth, hope, and the word of God. This is the full furniture of a Christian, by the which the Lord hath taught him to fight against the devil, and his instruments, and thereby to prevail, in and through their captain and head Christ Jesus.

And although there are other points of armor set down in other places of the Scripture, yet are they but parcels of this, or the same in other words expressed. Neither shall there need any other: for he who is attired and armed with this, shall not in any point be unprovided, or to seek of strength in the time of need. But yet doth not every man see by and by how these may be accounted armor, therefore will I describe them severally.

Sincerity or uprightness is that weapon of the spiritual warfare, and that fruit of the spirit which should accompany the whole conversation (not some few actions of a Christian) by the which he is simple and without fraud and hypocrisy bearing sway in him, both towards God and his neighbor: and it may the more clearly be discerned by considering the person in whom it is found, namely an upright man, whom (in the description of Nathaniel) our Savior Christ calleth a true Israelite in whom there is no guile: which virtue although it be a part of the Christian armor, yet that it is rare, not only the best do see, but even the bad sort do complain: according to the words of Solomon: Many men will boast, every one of his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man? That is to say, who will prove himself to be such a one indeed, as he will seem to be, by word

and show? For to say the truth, men are so infected with hollowness and glozing, and through custom and continuance therein so confirmed in it, that until God changeth the heart, Jeremiah's words are true of this one, as of other evils, It is as possible for him who is accustomed to evil, to return and do good, as for the black Moore to change his skin, or the Leopard her spots.

And this verity consisteth as well in holding and keeping the truth, I mean the sound knowledge of the word of God in our judgment, as the practice of it in a good conscience. Which I say, because there are some, who profess great friendship to the Gospel, who yet maintain strange opinions not according to the truth of it: as that the law ought not to be preached in any wise: and that there should no differences of men be made; when yet the Scripture putteth difference betwixt good and bad, both in their life and in rewards, Psalm. 1. The holding of such opinions therefore, standeth not with sincerity: which freely admitteth all opinions to be measured and censured by the word.

Now therefore if this be sincerity and uprightness to be free, not only from double heartedness and halting, but also, to be ready to yield a frank assent and practice to the truth; and also if this virtue be one part of the Christian armor: he who is void of this, must needs lie open to great danger, both by error in opinion and by corruption in life: for he wanteth that which should defend him. And contrarily, he who seeketh to please God unfeignedly, his conscience bearing him record, that he hath some true measure of this sincerity, and still laboreth after it, that is, to be simple and plain (though politic) in his words, actions and meaning, he hath this part of the armor: the use whereof how great and gainful it is, shall appear hereafter. And such a thing is verity or sincerity. But let this be added, that if any will

purpose this in some things, yet not resolve to show it in all, even this is the man, who is far from sincerity.

Righteousness is that part of the armor, and such a gift of the spirit whereby our hearts are bent to all manner of goodness, and righteous dealing, approving of it as most excellent, desiring fervently and delighting in it; and that because it is good: and disliking and hating all naughtiness and evil. And he who looketh to be preserved in manifold temptations to sin, and to keep in obedience to all kind of duties both towards God and men, whiles he liveth, had need to have no less, then this firmness and constancy of a righteous heart, and to be so thoroughly persuaded of the beauty and price of this one part of Christianity, namely, innocent and righteous dealing, that though infinite occasions shall arise to diminish the credit of it; yet he may clothe himself with it, as with a garment, and wear it as an ornament, that such an one he may show himself to be in his actions, that he may cause others to be in love with it also. Which virtue so shined in Joseph, that sundry times, when he might have wrought evil without fear of revenge to his brethren, who had given him strong occasion, he would not: nay, when he might have been preferred, by hearkening to his whorish mistress, he refused it with detestation (though thereby he procured to himself no small danger) saying, how can I do this great wickedness and so sin against God? Genes. 39:9.

He that seeth into this virtue, and liketh it so, that he will be wary that he commit no unrighteous thing against God nor man, as far as his knowledge guideth him, but settleth himself to do that, which is pleasing both in the sight of God, and before men: he hath this part of armor, and is fenced with the breastplate of righteousness. Such shall say with Job, If mine adversary write a book against me, I will put it behind my back (read it, who will) and glory in mine

accusations. The beauty of this grace and virtue is such, as may appear in the examples of those who were found innocent when they were charged and accused, as in David towards Saul, 1. Sam. 24:17, that if it could be seen with eye, it would exceedingly provoke men to be in love with it. And let all mark how fitly these two sincerity and righteousness, or innocence do go together.

To be prepared with the shoes of peace by the Gospel, is this, that we having received forgiveness of our sins, and assurance of salvation through faith by the Gospel, and thereby found most sweet peace to our conscience, we are now by this Gospel, as they who are ready to take a long journey, shod and prepared to be ready to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross, and follow Christ, throughout this our pilgrimage. This part of armor did our merciful father see meet for us, his weak children, seeing we are so dismayed at the beholding, or hearing of troubles to be at hand, although before they come, we were cheerful. He would therefore that we should not faint, nor be discouraged, no not even by them: but lift up our heads, and be of good comfort, seeing they are but for a short time, and our peace is continual: besides that, for the exceeding greatness of it, it passeth all understanding: and therefore it is able to keep our hearts comforted, even in our tribulations, through hope at least. Which our Savior foretold, that the faithful should have, but he armed them most graciously against them.

Neither is there indeed any other thing, that is able to stay us from deadly unquietness and bitter anguish at such times. For seeing we are going to God, and that must be through most dangerous ranks of cruel enemies, as through a wilderness of robbers, this is our encouragement to go on manfully, in that we know by the doctrine of the Gospel, that we take our journey to God who is at peace with us. He therefore, who hath this peace by the Gospel, is armed with this

part of Christian armor, called the shoes of preparation, as the soldier with his brassie boots, against all such hard and sharp afflictions, and troubles; which as pikes in the way, would otherwise so wound him, that he should not be able to stand in the battle; he is armed (I say) because he thus thinketh with himself, if God be with me, who can be against me? The Lord is my salvation and light, whom then should I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid?

To have this shield of faith, is to build our persuasion on God's faithful promises, that Christ Jesus is ours: and that God hath given him to us, to obtain forgiveness of our sins and salvation by him; yea and all other good things also, meet for this present life: As the Apostle saith; He that hath given us his Christ, how can he, but with him give us all things also? So that he which hath embraced these precious promises and resteth upon them, as certain and not doubtful, no more to be removed, and unsettled, as (if it be well weighed) there is no cause he should: he hath this part of the armor, and therefore shall not be overcome by those fearful temptations of Satan to strong distrustfulness, which as fiery darts be deadly to all which are not thus armed with a true and sound faith: and such an one may be rightly said, to put on the Lord Jesus, which cannot be done but by faith.

This hope is a joyful longing, and steadfast desire, Luk. 2:30. (as we may see in old father Simeon) and looking for the performing, and accomplishing of all those mercies temporal and eternal, which God hath promised, and we by faith are assured of. For this the Lord would have us to know, that he hath made no one promise to us, but he meaneth to fulfill it, that we may see it, and glorify him, for such loving kindness of his towards us: and therefore would have us also in reverence to hope perfectly, that is, confidently and constantly to



the end, as the Apostle speaketh, for such gracious gifts, as he hath bequeathed unto us. The which holy boldness, whiles we are propped up withal, our hearts are so well satisfied and contented, that we pass our days cheerfully, and walk in our callings joyfully, serving God therein: we like our portion marvelous well, and we enjoy our prosperity with much thankfulness.

And all this we do, because we have hope from God of all good things which shall be meet for us; yea and all this we do, not after the flesh, or because we have whatsoever heart can wish, or eye lust after (for our God indenteth not with us after any such manner) but because we have some measure of godliness with contentation, and have learned to be persuaded, that to be best for us, which he bringeth to pass; and so to hope still, that all things shall fall out to us for the best, because he hath so promised. And if it were not for this sweet hope, our lives should be most wearisome, except we should suffer them to be merely devilish. And without this of the armor of hope, all other hope is vain and deceitful, and as the rush without mire and moisture which withereth: and as the spiders web which is suddenly swept down.

Lastly, the armor of the word, which is called the sword of the spirit, is to be well instructed in the sound and living knowledge of the Scriptures, and to digest the same, and season our understanding with it, in such wise, that we may know the will of God, and have the same in remembrance, in the things which most concern us (as we can) that thereby we may at all times, and in all cases be readily led by it. That this may be a light to our feet, and a lantern to our steppes, as the Prophet teacheth: that so neither heresy in opinion, nor error in our life which shall be dangerous, may carry us away from our steadfastness in our Christian course: no nor so much as deceive us secretly, but we may be able to draw forth this sword of

the spirit, and to say, it is written that so no such thing may be done of us.

Such knowledge therefore of good and evil, cannot be wanting in us, nor the daily increasing of it be neglected, but fore and perilous wounds will by the adversary pierce our souls: so far is it off, that the most experienced and skillful Christian should think, he knoweth enough. Yet least any should deceive himself about this, thinking that he hath knowledge, this (I say) that if he be not counseled and guided by that he understandeth, He knoweth nothing, as he ought to know. For the fear of offending God is the beginning of wisdom, and he that keepeth (that is) faithfully endeavoreth to keep the commandments of God, is most wise. And so speaketh our Savior to his Apostles: If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them. This knowledge therefore, and the experience that we learn by it, how we have prospered, by living after it; is that part of Christian armor, which is called the sword of the spirit: and who doth not see, what a singular and necessary help it is, to the practicing of a godly life? For as a blind man is without a guide; so is a man without it.

And thus I have given the reader a taste of the armor of a Christian, what it is: who by due consideration of the power and use of every part of it, may easily see, that he who is furnished with the same, may be able to do wonderful things, in respect of him, which goeth to work by his own advice and power, or (which is all one) by mixing it with the word of God. And yet so do the most, who profess the Gospel: they will not altogether exclude the commandments of God, so that they refuse altogether to be governed by them: yet for all that, they will not bind themselves to be ruled by them, in one thing as in another: and therefore doth their life, and talk jar and jangle, in respect of the knowledge of duty which they have, and is even harsh and unsavory to good and bad, and to themselves also, if they would

but search and look into their ways seriously and carefully at any time. And this briefly be said of the first point concerning the Christian armor, to show what it is, and which are the parts of it.

Now to go forward to the second, which is, that the Christian life cannot stand without it. He that is willing to live Christianly throughout his life, (for God giveth us no liberty of intermission or stay) he must not be content to have this knowledge of the armor swimming in his brain, or lying by him in a book, but to be digested of him, and made his own, and no more stand at the putting on of this holy armor, then to doubt of the truth of it: he must always be ready to clothe and furnish his soul with the several parts of it (to cover the nakedness and shame thereof, and to make it comely and well favored in the sight of God) as his body with apparel: and to arm it therewith as the soldier is with his Corselet, head-piece, sword, &c. because by it, God hath appointed to defend him, from the spiritual craftiness of his deadly enemy the devil, and from the deceitfulness of the most noisome sin.

And most sure it is, to him who will look into it, that all other good helps to godliness, as prayer, reading, conference, though in themselves very profitable; yet they do Christians the less good, if they be without the armor. And therefore when the Apostle had taught the Ephesians to practice the particular duties of Christianity, he sendeth them to this armor, to enable them to stand fast therein, without the which, the devil (he telleth them) would with his subtle baits and delusions, draw them from whatsoever he exhorteth them unto; yea although they had desire to be obedient to the same. Thus he writeth, saying: Take unto you that whole armor of God, that ye may be able to resist in the evil day: that is, in the hard time, when Satan bendeth all his force against you, and proclaimeth (as it were) open war; as well as when the danger seemeth to be smaller: and

having done all things, that is, resisted your enemy, stand by the strength thereof, and keep yourselves armed still against new assaults. By this it is clear, that seeing the devil is a professed enemy of ours, and one that woundeth us secretly, when we are not aware, and is at hand to do us most harm, when we do not so much as dream of any such matter: it is clear, I say, that if we be not prepared against such dangers, we must needs be sore hurt. Who goeth forth naked and unarmed unto the battle, where so many kinds of weapons are ready to take away his life? Nay all is little enough, though he be armed in every part.

That which I say in general of the whole, will better appear if we go through every particular part of it. For who will adventure to go barefooted among thorns and stubs, yea to run upon the pikes, but he will be well shod? Even so, who will be bold to go through the manifold storms and tribulations of this life, which rise up in his way, in every place, not to prick his feet, but to pierce and go through his heart: as it is said of Marie her troubles, that they should pierce thorough her soul, even as a sword, which goeth to the entrails: who (I say) will go through these storms, but he will be well armed against them, and strongly prepared and settled to stay himself upon God by the peace and comfort which he draweth from Christ's own words, even these: Though in the world ye shall have tribulation, yet be of good comfort, for I have overcome the world?

And that which I say of this one kind, I may in like manner say of all the parts of the armor which God hath furnished a Christian with: that he can walk in no safety thorough the Campe of this world without them, and every of them. Who can be free from despairing of God's mercy (which is a fiery and venomous dart) or else from dreadful doubting and fear (which are companions thereunto) or (which is as deadly and dangerous) from presumption, vain hope,

and deceiving of himself, which hath not the shield of faith; and is not certain thereby of eternal salvation; and of the favor of God to guard him in this life? And though this man had no other thing to make him unhappy: yet who doth not see, that even this is enough to make all his pleasures unsavory, if he should either feel the one, or might be persuaded of the other?

Besides, what is his life (even at the best) when he hath no trust in God's manifold promises? And although these things being not seen with eye, be as little thought upon of the most part in the world; yet the Scripture hath concluded, that there is no sound peace to any such; yea rather that the devil hath, as a raging lion, his paw upon their throat ready every hour to take away their soul: as the Apostle showeth (though this seem less, seeing it is not known nor felt) whereas if they were shielded by this faith, and that in their need, it should not be so with; them but thereby they resisting him, he should fly from them.

Again, to show how impossible it is to be in safety without the other parts of the Christian armor; how can any man walk innocent and harmless among his neighbors, though others should walk so towards him, except he hath put on the breast-plate of righteousness; and armed himself with this cogitation, to do no man any wrong; and not only so, but also to do no other iniquity or evil, which might offend any, or wound his own soul? How many ways shall he be carried to sin against God, and his neighbor? I speak not of an unbeliever, who can do nothing but sin; but even of a Christian, who hath an heart which hateth sin: yet even he, if he indent not from time to time a fresh with his heart, against all unrighteousness, and the parts of unholy life, he shall be disfigured with many blemishes, and disgrace himself and his holy profession also, by his many unlawful actions: so far is it off, that innocence is in his heart, and in

his hands, and that he liveth unrebukable, and without blame amongst men.

And therefore it is that S. Paul teaching the Corinthians how they should be appareled with the parts of Christian armor, as purity and uprightness, knowledge of the word of God, and with patience and long suffering, which hope engendereth, doth among the rest, commend to them this one, by his own example, namely, the armor of righteousness, both on the right hand, and on the left, that is, in prosperity and adversity, that so they should give no occasion of offense in anything, but in all things approve themselves as the servants of God.

The same may be said of the other parts of the Christian armor, that I have said of the shoes of peace, of the shield of faith, and of the breast-plate of righteousness. For if there be not some clear and sound knowledge of the word of God (which as a sword may cut the bands of sin asunder like a cord) how shall a Christian be able to discern the deceitfulness of sin, but be led by it and taken with it, as with a bait? How can he choose, although he be zealous and desirous to do well, but to be led into many errors, and so go without the sweet life, which in Christianity is to be found, if he have not well learned and digested this in the depth of his heart, it is written, to the contrary? So if he be not girded, as it were, with sincerity, that he may be adorned with it wheresoever he become, and all other good gifts of God in him be bound together by that, that he hath them in truth, that he delighteth in them indeed; how shall he be infected with hollowness and hypocrisy, what show of holiness soever appear in him?

To conclude, what can there be in his life daily, but fainting, uncomfortableness, and sundry discouragements, whiles he is

weaned from the foolish and vain delights of this world, and seeth not the pleasures of heaven with mortal eyes; what can there else be to him (I say) if the hope of salvation be not as an helmet, to keep life in his soul: and with this hope of salvation, which cannot deceive him, a cheerful hope of well passing the course of these conflicting days also under the wings of God's protection, till he come thither? As for other hope, who knoweth not, that all other hope of earthly peace, or long life, is like to a broken tooth, and sliding foot? But by this hope, tediousness is removed, and cheerfulness to wait contentedly in this pilgrimage for a full deliverance, is obtained. Therefore how truly may this be said, that the Christian life, without the armor of God, cannot be continued?

For if every part of it be so needful throughout our life (as hath been said) who seeth not, that even such an one, as hath received grace from above, by the preaching of the Gospel, to be borne a new, and to be begotten to a lively hope; yet for all this, shall not thrive, nor prosper, without diligent and usual nourishing of this new birth in him, nor grow up to a perfect age in Christ, delivered from the hindrances by the world and the devil, except he be strongly armed, as God hath taught him to be?

This is so truly verified in all God's children, that even they who are not the forwardest of others, yet if they have any strength against evil at any time, they have it from God thus, even by the means of the armor. If they were not sometimes armed, they should make as great breaches, and fall as dangerously, one day as another: and yet if they were acquainted with this armor thoroughly, they should make their worst and most uncomfortable day in the week, equal with the best and the happiest (which they sometime enjoyed) in heavenly passing of their time, and in sweet comfort. And for want of this armor (either for that men know it not, or for not having use of it) the

infinite irksomeness's, heaviness, distraction, dumpishness, doubting, and fear do vex them, and such like deadly poisons do occupy the hearts even of Christians, as also light rejoicing in a fleshly manner, vain hope, fantastical dreams of peace and safety, where none is. And for want of this, their lives also before men are kept from showing forth light and good example in one thing, as well as in another: yea rather, they are harborers of sundry evil qualities, in so much that few are encouraged to wax better by them, nor to suspect that anything is amiss in them, but are hardened to go forward in their old course still.

And if it be thus with such, as have some good and sound beginnings in Christianity, let no man marvel, though they, who are utterly destitute of faith, and of other parts of the Christian armor, be so far off from good life as they be, seeing they renounce this arming of themselves, which I have proved, that a Christian life cannot be without.

And now by this which hath been said of the armor hitherto, it is the easier to understand what it is, and what the parts of it are, and how the Christian life cannot stand without it. Now I will proceed (as I have promised) to the third point in this matter concerning the armor, namely, how it should be put on, and be worn, that so we may better see how to take that good by it, which God offereth us. For which end and purpose it is to be marked, that every true believer in his first conversion to God, is thereby made partaker of all things pertaining to life and godliness, and therefore is not destitute of any common grace of a true Christian: having them, as a child lately borne, all the parts and faculties of soul and body, though weak in all: amongst which, these that are here compared to armor, are principal.



This being so, a faithful Christian need not wonder, when he is willed to have this grace, and parts of this holy armor in a readiness; he need not wonder (I say) where he shall have it, or doubt how to come by it: For we see he hath it already; and as our Savior Christ said; The kingdom of heaven (that is, the glorious reigning of his in the elect) cometh not by observation, neither shall men say, loe here, loe there; for the kingdom of heaven is in you: So (I say) this armor, which God hath appointed to defend his militant Church withal, from infernal slavery, it is not to be seen, nor to be gazed upon with the eye, but it is in the faithful, and possesseth their souls, even now, when many will (perhaps) ask how shall we come by it? Or, where is it? For if any should imagine, that he hath it not after believing (as through ignorance he must needs) can such a one choose, but be exceedingly troubled about this, how he should come by it, and put it on? For such a charge the Apostle giveth.

Let us know therefore, that this armor is not always to be in seeking, (which had not need to be, when it should be in occupying) but the Lord according to the necessity of it, which he seeth to be in every one of his children, against the infinite dangers of the world, doth provide it for every one of them; and furnisheth then with the same. Every one of them hath some measure of true faith and hope, though this be weak in them: everyone hateth iniquity, and is ready to work righteousness, according to his skill: and the most feeble Christian hath an upright heart, and some spiritual wisdom to discern good from evil (which yet a man of greater knowledge, if he be not enlightened with the spirit of regeneration, cannot) although one more then another. And the same I say of the rest.

But ye will object, why doth the Apostle will us to put it on, if we have it already? And will say, this doubt is not yet answered, neither can ye tell what he meaneth by that, when he speaketh thus, Put on the

whole armor? To this I answer, that his charge is, that Christians should not have this spiritual armor, as men in time of peace, have bodily armor hanging by, and rusty, and utterly unfit for use; but as soldiers have theirs in battle, that is, girded to them, and put upon them, and this also whiles the battle continueth: So he commandeth us, that we let not the parts of this armor so to be unoccupied in us, that we have no feeling of it, and so no benefit by it, but be sure continually that we have it on, and ready for use; that we lie down with it, and rise up with it, and be well advised, that through the day in all places, and whatsoever we go about we have it with us, as far as we can be able.

This is his meaning when he saith, put on the whole armor: and in another place, put on tender mercy, and kindness, as the elect of God. For our battle lasteth all our life long; and our enemies be deadly, and all our strength is by our armor: Therefore who seeth not now, that a Christian can safely be no time without this armor? If this be dark and hard to any, even they may know themselves to be those, who have not skill to put on this armor, and who have been ignorant of the use and power of it: they have not well learned the will of God about the necessity and benefit of it. And therefore even such, though they may be the Lord's; yet doubtless the devil holdeth them in strong chains of darkness, and ignorance: and therefore also in great slavery and bondage, which God for his part hath showed them the way to come out of, if they could once come to see the same, and be persuaded that they have a part in it.

For through the unskillfulness of men in the right use of the armor, and unacquaintance with every part of it, the lives even of the dear servants of God, are much blemished, and unglorious amongst men, and to themselves (besides the idleness, and unprofitableness, of them) exceedingly uncheerful. Therefore, seeing God hath given

them all helps needful for their defense from this present evil world, from subjection to Satan, and their own damnable lusts; seeing also he hath taught them to know this their liberty and privilege, to have the daily aide and benefit of their armor, for the strengthening of them in all good duties, I know nothing to remain doubtful, which should need to trouble them hereafter, no not the weakest, save this one thing: namely, how this armor should be put on.

Now to have the feeling of every part of this armor (faith against distrust at any time, hope against fainting, uprightness against hypocrisy, knowledge against the deceitfulness of sin, righteousness against all kind of iniquity, and the preparation of the Gospel of peace against crosses) to have (I say) this armor in a readiness to safe conduct and keep us throughout our life in the practice of our Christian direction, this is to be done: Watchfulness continual, and prayer hearty and oft is to be used of us; which also is prescribed of the Apostle himself, when he saith (after he willeth the Ephesians to take to them this whole armor) pray always withal manner of prayer, and watch thereunto with all perseverance, &c.

We see God will have us persuaded that this whole armor may be had and put on, and therefore to pray to him for it. But in any wise, these prayers he will have to be made without doubting and wavering, without which manner of praying, we cannot look to receive anything. For it hath pleased our good God, seeing we are so prone to doubting, to give us a most sure word of promise, of all such things as we have need of, that if we think God to be credited, we may look for them without fear or wavering.

He that heartily craveth this, as a thing which he cannot be without (seeing he asketh according to the will of God) and that which God commandeth him, as we see Ephes. 6:14, he hath and obtaineth the

same which he desireth, 1. John. 4:16, and Matth. 6:7, ask and ye shall receive. For if Hagar praying in her distress was heard, when she saw not how; and if our Savior did say to the woman of Samaria, if thou haddest but asked, I would have given thee water of life: is it to be doubted of, that God's dear servants shall be denied their requests? If a natural father will give that which is meet to his child, who yet neither knoweth always what is best, neither is at all times so kind as he ought; shall we call the readiness of our heavenly father into question, especially about such a gift, as both he hath bidden us ask, yea and also take? Yea and such a gift, as without the which, we cannot honor nor serve him aright?

This I speak to hearten and encourage all, to pray oft and earnestly (which is in so little request in the world) for this gift, that they may know that by this means, they shall put on this holy armor of God, especially when they shall here withal, watch, that they do receive strength by their prayers, indeed so to do. And if this be not found and obtained by such as yet do pray for it, let them know, that they pray faintly and coldly, or slackly and negligently: for otherwise this is the way to put upon us the whole armor; as David's dealing with Goliath doth prefigure, and the example of the Saints of God for the particular parts of it; as by their especial necessities they have been provoked: as Solomon for wisdom. David did thus usually stir up his faith, which was the putting on of it, which before lay by, as it were, unoccupied, and so of the rest. And to get wisdom, whereby to be prepared for the cross, and to bear it meekly, the Apostle willeth to pray without doubting.

With our prayer, holy meditation is to be used of every part of our armor, when we have been taught it, till we know the use and benefit of it. And until the matter of it be more familiar to us, confer about it with such as have knowledge and experience therein: that

whatsoever is hard to be understood or practiced, may be made easy. This I speak for the benefit of the weak, seeing everything is most hard to them, before they have attained to it, although it be never so plainly set down to them. And read either this which I have for thy sake written of this argument, or any sound treatise concerning this matter. Stir up, and persuade thyself hereto, by this reason, that thou walkest naked, except thou be clothed with it: and as an unarmed man fighting with many strong enemies thoroughly furnished; so art thou in this world without it.

And when by reading, hearing, or conference, thou shalt see what help cometh by thine armor to the well framing of thine heart and life, and by meditation sometime on the several partes of it (as I have prescribed) and hast duly weighed and mused upon the same, to affect and season thy heart therewith, and by prayer hast with confidence desired of God, that even thou particularly mayest find, as thou shalt see cause, thyself strengthened with every part of this armor: when (I say) thou hast done this, then hast thou put it on. This is the way of putting it on: that when thou knowest every part of it, and whereto it serves, and canst be willing to walk in this spiritual attire, thou mayest be kept safe (as they say) from wind and weather, even from world and devil.

For then shalt thou, having this grace of believing, hoping, righteous living, upright meaning, &c. bring forth the fruit of it, as thou shalt have occasion through the day, that is to say, to give credit to God's promises from time to time: to hope at one time, as well as another: to be upright and without fraud in one thing as well as in another; and yet remember that I can speak to thee, when thou art at the best, but as to a man subject to infirmities; and lastly to give duties to God as well as to men, and to one man, and in one action, as well as in

another: which to do, is to show forth the fruit of the armor of righteousness. And the same I say of the rest.

But with all this, it is to be known and regarded, that as it is thus to be put on: so it is after the same manner to be kept on. For example: for the retaining, or recovering of this one piece of the whole armor, I mean peace, or rejoicing, which we should not be void of at any time, continual prayer is required: for he having said, rejoice evermore, he addeth, pray continually. And as Saint Paul saith, that by this putting on of the whole armor, a Christian may stand fast in the evil day of temptation, which is the hardest time: So Saint Peter saith, that if we give all diligence hereto, that we join with our faith, virtue, knowledge, patience, &c. (which who knoweth not, that it is chiefly done, by watching and prayer?) we shall never fall, that is, dangerously: to take any great hurt, or annoyance thereby. Whereby, he showeth that he agreeth with Saint Paul, namely, that for the furnishing of ourselves with the graces of the spirit, which are the several parts of the armor; continual care and diligence be used by prayer and watchfulness, which is the only way to put and keep it on.

But here let the reader remember and consider to whom the Lord speaketh, when he willeth to put on, and to have in a readiness this armor against all spiritual craftiness: For as he, who is not yet resolved fully to be a Christian, and to lead a godly life, is utterly unfit for this armor, and hath neither mind nor desire to it, neither can possibly put it on: so on the contrary not only the stronger Christian; but also the new borne babe, and he, even the weakest youngling in God's family, who hath never so small ability to resist sin, and withstand the same, God hath bidden him to take it to him, and to gird himself with it, and to put it on. It is munition appointed to him of God, to save him from danger, even the greatest that can be raised against him: who therefore shall withhold him from it? It

keepeth his soul and his life; what should therefore make him so slavish to fear, and full of distrustful phantasies, and discouragements, as to cast away his weapons, and wittingly to offer himself into the lions mouth? Every such therefore must put forth himself to be more bold with reverence, to take unto him this armor which none can want with safety) when he seeth who encourageth him, even he that is able to strengthen him, to the obtaining of that which he setteth him about, namely, God all-sufficient. He must be more bold to keep his crown, and honor, even this holy armor, which is more precious to him, then life itself, and suffer none to take it from him.

This I speak for their sakes, who desire, as much as I exhort them to: who yet do but weakly know, that there is such armor, or that it hath any such use to make a Christian strong against sin and Satan: much less do themselves receive any such benefit by it, to their knowledge; and yet are not without it, that they may see their case better than they have thought it, and that God hath provided for them far better, then they were persuaded. Therefore let them, for whom God hath provided this, not only not be ignorant of it hereafter, but neither let them be slothful, or backward to get a part in it, by putting and keeping it on.

And therefore let them urge themselves (if they wax cold or untoward) to use the means before mentioned, whereby this armor is put on and held in a readiness. And if the means themselves grow unsavory with them, ordinary prayer (I mean) and watchfulness, as they may easily do, if the heart be discouraged or set in evil delights, let them drive out that devil with fasting and prayer, and give no rest to their eyes, nor ease to their hearts, until they have in some comfortable manner, recovered their first love and strength, which

they had once by this armor; I say, let them not rest till they have recovered it again.

And let them persuade themselves, that fearful danger is not far off from them, if they awake not, and that speedily. For although it be at the first, with a weak Christian in the putting on of this spiritual armor, as with a fresh soldier, in putting on his bodily armor, namely, to account it strange and wearisome, as not being acquainted therewith; and therefore to wish to be unburdened of it: yet weighing with himself, that God hath given it him for his singular benefit, he will be admonished, and take counsel to do otherwise.

## **CHAP. 8.**

Of the last point, which is the benefit of this armor.

And thus to come to the last point in hand, he which will learn to put on this armor, and to go clothed with it through the day, shall find everything true which God hath spoken, and I have here set down unto him; that is, that by resisting the devil, he shall fly from him: and having these parts of it fast tied to his soul, the depth and subtlety of hell shall not prevail against him, which is the fruit and use of it; as no man should need to doubt, if he could take delight in being watchful to be thus occupied. For as S. Paul writeth to the Corinthians, The weapons of our warfare are not carnal or bodily, but mighty through God, to cast down holds; even imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. So that, whether the devil and his instruments do assault by craft and deceit, or by force and might, the Christian being armed, as hath been said, and furnished with that strength, shall mightily prevail against them, and preserve himself.



Such is the power of this armor, that even of one part of it, the Scripture giveth wonderful commendation, ascribing to faith alone victory over the world, and all the deceits of it. S. Peter likewise saith, that he who is steadfast in faith, resisteth the devil himself. So our Savior saith, All things are possible to him that believeth. For all things are not only possible, but also easy which we do desire, having a promise of God, for the performing thereof, upon which we firmly rest. As the benefit of this one part of our armor, faith, is singular great, and the power of it mighty: so it may be said of the rest, and namely of a pure heart.

For even this one is able to carry us thorough strong temptations, that we shall not halt, and deal hollowly, as men of the world do, but simply and in a good meaning; yea it keepeth us merry and joyful, as the Apostle saith, when such as want it must hold down the head: and that I say no more, it maketh our estate happy, according to that which is written; Blessed are the pure and upright in heart.

Now therefore, if someone part of this heavenly attire and armor be so helpful, and of so great use, what think we the whole to be? Yea, as I said, to be clothed with the whole complete armor of a Christian, is such a safe walking against the subtleties of the devil, the allurements of the world, and the deceitfulness of sin, that a Christian may be unwounded, whiles he goeth through many dangerous attempts; yea and enjoy most sweet communion with God throughout the day thereby, and yet without flattering of himself and dangerous security.

As, in particulars, he being resolved to put on, and to clothe himself with righteousness, and preparation for the cross, by the defense and shelter of the doctrine of the Gospel, whiles he is to war here in this life, shall be brought hereby, to meekness, patience, and long

sufferance with joyfulness, (when God afflicteth him) by the one; and to love those which are his enemies, and to be innocent towards all (because these are branches of righteousness) by the other, and not to be led after the contrary evils: for all these duties, and many more (such are the fruits of the tree of righteousness, which God hath planted and watered, in the fruitful ground of his heart) all these, I say, shall he bring forth, and many more abundantly.

Likewise, he who hath set himself to seek wisdom as gold, and to lay up understanding as treasure within him, he shall be taught the good and perfect way, when others shall ever reel and fall; yea when they shall walk in by-ways, and be wandering (although seeking it) and that forever, he shall see the way before him, as the Kings high way, broad and plain; and know the will of God, which shall be his guide: and therefore his steps shall be pleasant, as in the plain and known way, in respect of the rough, and that which is uncertain.

And the like fruit I would set down of the rest, but that I have done it already, and would not grow tedious, seeing much matter to arise. If therefore we can like to be accompanied with this holy train; and love to go armed with these weapons; with that measure of knowledge which God hath taught us, and to enjoy new increase daily; armed with righteousness and godliness which we can reach and attain; upholden in that hope, which he hath put into us; strengthened with that faith in all his promises, which, at our first embracing them, we received; and prepared and stayed in our afflictions, with peaceable and quiet hearts, by the Gospel, as he hath encouraged us: then shall we be able to live in all estates which God shall set us in, and in all places which he shall bring us to; and change by no occasions, seeing he hath strengthened us, until we see an end of all difficulties and uncertainties.

And all such as conceive the matter which is presently handled, should think this advice and counsel so needful for them, of going thus armed thorough the battle of this life, that they should not think themselves ready any day, till they have put on the Lord Jesus with his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: that is done, when by faith they count him theirs; that so they may as far as Christ can help them (and wherein can he not?) want nothing. And when by the help of this, we shall be defended against the evils of the day (for behold and this know, that to this end is this mighty armor bequeathed us by our God) then have we acquitted ourselves well, and brought the work of that day to a good end, that so we may do one day after another.

And thus to bring this whole matter of the armor to an end also: whosoever thou art, who canst be persuaded resolutely, to be thus armed thorough this warfare of thy life, thee will I not doubt to lead into the only safe way, yea pleasant, profitable, beautiful, honorable, and the only happy way. And thou thyself shalt say it in a short time, when through some experience thou shalt be able to compare it with all the days of thy life past, even the best of them, and shalt find it, even at the first entrance into it (which is the weakest) far to exceed them in their greatest beauty. For the longer thou shalt abide in it; the better thou shalt find it, and the more it will make thee to be in love with it, for that thou shalt see a continual use of it, and no estate to be comparable to it.

Neither maketh it any matter, how ignorant thou art (for that perhaps may discourage some) if thou hast knowledge enough to see this to be the best of all other ways; nor how weak thou art, if thou beest strong enough to be persuaded to walk in it: and guess what thou shalt want of that which I have said, when God shall give thee

an heart thus inclined, as bidding farewell to all courses which he approveth not, to settle thee in this, which he commendeth to thee.

And when thou seest that thou art acquainted with this armor, and how it helpeth thee daily to live innocently and Christianly, then consider what thou hast, how rich it maketh thee, and what great privileges the Lord hath given thee: and then as Abigail said to David, when thou shalt reap such fruit of it, thou shalt not repent that thou tookest such counsel: be glad of them, be highly thankful for them, more than if thou haddest found great treasure: weigh what protection against the devil, thou hast thereby: what safe-conduct from falls: what fear and doubts thou art delivered from: what mists of ignorance, as scales from thine eyes, are plucked from thine heart: what strength against thy strongest infirmities thou findest; how easily thou mayest turn into the way again, if at any time by weakness thou hast slipped: yea consider moreover what peace to thy conscience thou hast, and rest to thy soul: when thou seest, not only more clearly than before thou wert thus armed, that there is no condemnation to thee; but also that God now fighteth for thee and maketh thee fit to resist the deceitfulness of strong temptations, who wert before so faint and impotent in resisting them.

In few words to speak what I think meet, concerning this matter, thou canst never sufficiently esteem of this blessed estate, although thou art not utterly free from all temporal afflictions thereby. Oft times shalt thou be thinking, it is too good to continue: till thou rememberest that there is no shadow of changing with God. Oft times thou shalt wonder to see, what a liberal portion God hath given thee, to have such sweet communion with him, and to have confidence and boldness before him, in all difficulties: when the most part of the world is ever subject to most dreadful fear of his

vengeance, as oft as he shall show them the danger wherein they lie. And when thou shalt see and feel all this, how much it is worth, to be thus fenced in from daily vexations, which most men are turmoiled withal; then thou shalt not need to doubt, whether thou shalt be willing to keep on this armor still, for thou shalt see that thou canst not feel thyself well without it.

Now whereas it may be objected, who, or where is the man, which findeth this liberty in his life? Or what arming of a man is able to set him in safety from the manifold evils, which most men complain of daily? I affirm of my knowledge in all reverence giving the praise and glory of it to God, that there are many such, who to the peace of their conscience enjoy it; and I as little doubt, that there are many more whom I know not: And yet I am persuaded, that thousands even of God's dear servants are holden back from this blessing through the malice of our common enemy, who are kept at a stay by his subtlety, either ignorant of this liberty, and thinking that God doth not honor any of his servants with such privileges while they live here, and therefore count it presumption to look for any such thing: or if they know it, yet do favor themselves in their present wants and infirmities, and do use small violence against the same: and so they are holden back from enjoining this comfort and blessedness in their lives, which they might otherwise be partakers of.

For let all know this, that the suffering of their hearts to take their fill in the delights of this world, and little pains taken in musing upon this heavenly estate, and their slight praying for it, is the principal cause (seeing God hath promised to work by means) why Christians have not further acquaintance with this armed life, and the blessed fruits thereof: and many other attain not hereto, seeing they never understand (although they are not utterly without faith) that God hath appointed them to live after any certain direction throughout

their course, and to be armed thereunto, but in a general manner only serve God, without any great watchfulness over their particular actions.

Now if they count this burthensome, they must be content to be brought to shame sometimes for their doings, and sometimes to terror and torment of conscience, for their slippery walking, and small regard of honoring God, as well in one duties as in another, seeing these are properties of sin, which cannot be separated from it, that howsoever they oft fear no such thing, yet one time or other it will find them out. This diet, I say, they must oftentimes look to be kept at (who settle not themselves soundly in the Christian life) even to find here much shame and sorrow, which other of God's servants shall be void of. And if it be so with them, judge what is the estate of the hypocrite, and profane sort?

But that none may be troubled at that which I have set down of the power and use of the armor: as thinking that which I have said, but a mere fancy and untruth, seeing the enemies which we fight against, are strong and raging; and many good servants of God have been subdued of them in temptation: whereas I have not spoken much (say they) of the conflicts and combats, which they have with the allurements of sin, as though they resisted and overcame them with ease, and without any great striving: To satisfy such, I answer that the speaking of conflicts belongeth to another treatise, namely the fifth, where I handle the doctrine of the lets; here I only speak of the armor, according to the parts of the division set down; and yet none can understand me (if he mark) that I think sin and our lusts to be easily overcome, which I call furious and raging; or Satan's suggestions by objects or without, to be soon resisted, which I say, are both slyly wrought to deceive us, and to have mighty force to draw and allure us: but rather every discreet reader may gather, that

I count it the most hard and difficult of all other things to subdue, and conquer them, because I show such necessity of walking armed continually against them. For what can I say less, then that we must strive manfully, and stand upon our watch, and that we cannot be crowned except we strive lawfully, that is, steadfastly: yea and that for all our armor, we being unskillful, or faint and timorous in using it, nor only we may be, but also are oft times foiled, as if hope of victory and of prevailing against them, were past.

All this I say: and yet in the weakest estate, we are not forsaken of God, though in some distress for a time: nor swallowed up, though we be in sorrow: nor in despair, when we be in some discomfort, but when we are at the lowest ebb, that in some temptation we yield and be overcome of it: yet even in that we are not so miserable as others who strive not at all, but are for a while left to ourselves to see our weakness, that afterwards we may gather more strength, and (as it were) fetch our breath, that we may take better hold, and resist more valiantly; especially when through any of our own defaults, we were overcome: And yet whensoever it is so with us, who can deny, but that it so came to pass, because we were no better armed? And for that we were either unskillful and unexpert, or slothful and slack in using it? So that, I say still, as I said before, that whatsoever our temptations and assaults be, by the help of our armor, as Christ our captain hath taught us to wear and keep it on, we prevail and thereby rejoice; even as contrarily, we must needs sorrow, whiles we be naked and unarmed in the battle. But we may for just cause be upholden, and war cheerfully against all kinds of enemies, when (as Joshua) we have promise of the victory, the weapons of our warfare being mighty.

And thus I have showed, how the third help, namely the Christian armor is an especial furthering of us in a godly life. But because I

know, that this which I say, will seem to some very doubtful, and scarce like to be true, that for want of putting on, and keeping on this Christian armor, their estate is both unglorious and uncomfortable (who yet are of this mind, that they may be Christians good enough, though they know it not) I will therefore satisfy such as I can, in few words. Other some think, that although it is fit and meet for strong Christians, yet that weak ones ought not to be troubled with the seeking for it, but may content themselves to serve God as they can, without it: their reason is this, least whiles we lay such strong load and burdens on them, being yet but weak, we discourage and drive them out of heart, altogether.

These two objections indeed, the wit of man after the hearing of this present doctrine of the armor, will be ready to put forth, and he that is past both these doubts, and troubled with neither of them, I think (nay, I know) that he hath overcome much, and hath well profited. For the satisfying of those who are weaker, I will answer a little to both. To the foremost, why should any think, that they may be good Christians without this, seeing they must needs grant, that if they walk nakedly, they cannot walk safely (every man being a blind guide to himself:) I deny not, but that a Christian fearing God, and believing in him, may be ignorant of this armor; but then let not such say, that they may serve God well enough without it, which is here objected: for that is far off from the most zealous, and he who thinketh himself forwardest, yea and hath a large heart filled with holy desires, is far off from it. For what substance of godliness is there in such a life, that it should be a serving of God aright, and as it is behoofull? Seeing it shall be found both idle and unprofitable, or a wandering course, and that which is in no wise to be rested in without the help of the armor: from which they have their strength to live well, whosoever hath any measure of grace to live godly, as by considering the force and use of the armor may be easily seen. And



therefore it is a speech at the least, full of ignorance, to say, we may serve God as it is meet, although we have no acquaintance with the armor.

For the second objection, that it seemeth to be too heavy a burdening of weak Christians, to impose and lay it upon them, it is as unsavory as the former. For they who are new borne (which sort is the weakest and feeblest in God's family) are no sooner brought out of the thralldom, and fear of damnation (wherein Satan held them before) but if they were able to speak, they would first ask for this, that they might ever abide in the estate of salvation, wherein they now see themselves to be, and never forget God's kindness, but daily and hourly feel and enjoy it: also to honor him for it, to testify their thankfulness, to please him in all things, and in all estates, and for this cause to know his will: for all which purposes the armor serveth: This (I say) is their nature, and this desire is in them, even when they are at the weakest, as the young infant crieth for nourishment. So that none shall need to fear, that they be pressed sore by offering them this, being even that which they most desire and long for. The seed doth no more naturally desire to prick up out of the ground, and so give hope of a harvest, though it be held back by storms and cold, then the young Christian doth desire to be holpen forward in the forementioned graces, and clothed with them, as he is able to reach to them. And what other thing is this, then to desire to be well armed, to the end that God may be daily honored and obeyed of him, and he himself may prosper and keep his soul in safety? True it is, he is not settled herein to his contentation: and who marveleth at it? Hath not the young child, and tender plant their season to grow up in? But when they shoot forth and flourish (as they may do, for their time) will not all say, that they prosper, though they have their wintering, as well as their summering time? So it is with the beloved, though weak Christians, and children of God: who although they

have many discouragements and hindrances, as the stormy cold is to the young plants, and many sore doubts, fears, discomforts, as nipping's of their growing, by the devil, and their own strong relics of their corruptions; yet do they, being rooted in good ground, and well-watered, and weathered (as there is none to the armor, which God's word teacheth) grow up and prosper as the Lord's plants.

But it may be, that some beholding diverse zealous and godly Christians, (for in respect of the common sort they may so be accounted) who have been both pricked in conscience for their sin, and seemed to have received comfort, and to be earnest lovers of the word, and the greatest bringers on of others to religion in many places, who yet seem not to be thus armed against sin; therefore much less new borne babes in Christianity are fit to be urged with it: to this I say, what effects of the Ministry such have had, it skilleth not, neither how they have been affected by hearing the word, nor with what zeal they profess it: and therefore no good reason, that if such have not had use of it, therefore that weak Christians should not be forced thereunto. For it hath been proved, that the weakest, if they be the Lord's, do desire it: and therefore the other (in what account soever they go) if they do not so, but can think themselves in case good enough without it, are hereby brought into suspicion of bastardy, and that they are not the Lord's, though some things worthy commendation may be in them, more than in many others. Neither ought this which I say, seem strange: for both in Scripture, and in experience, many have shined as lights for a season, and in show of zeal and godly life, have been (both of the Ministers and people) in account above the most: who for all this, have shamefully fallen from their first love, such as it seemed sometime to be. And therefore no marvel, though this urging of the Christian armor do not savor greatly to them, which yet is savory to the new borne in God's household.

But of those men, which have seemed forwarder then they are, I have here no fit place to deal further with them: only let them consider what danger it carrieth with it, to have been in likelihood of goodness, and now not to be: and whether this be with the righteous to shine daily more and more, as the light doth, unto the perfect day. I conclude that which I propounded to answer, that the putting on the armor of a Christian, is not too strong meat for the youngest that is nourished up in God's house, nor too weighty a burden to lay upon them, but the very same, which of all other things they most desire, as they can discern it, that they may more fruitfully and cheerfully serve God thereby.

## **CHAP. 9.**

Of our own experience, and what a special help it is to the leading of a godly life: Also of the use of company and family exercises.

I have showed how the forementioned three private helps, (watchfulness, meditation, and the Christian armor) are singular furtherance's of us to a godly life: Now I should pass to the next, that is, to the use of company by conference. But I must here stay a while, to lay forth the benefit of experience, which I had done in handling the doctrine of the Christian armor, seeing it belongeth to one part of it: but I could not conveniently speak of it there, but as I have done, briefly, least among all the parts of the armor, which I have described in a short manner, this which is but a branch of one of them, should have been discoursed of more largely, then all they together, which I did not think expedient. Now therefore of this our experience, as it shall be fit for the present purpose; namely, what a help it is, to confirm us in faith and obedience: which shall be proved, after that I have showed what it is, and how far it reacheth. Now it is a branch of

that part of the armor, which is called the sword of the spirit, that is, the word of God: and that knowledge which we learn by proof and trial for the bettering of us. I call it a branch of it, seeing there is another besides it: and I say, it is the knowledge which we gather by proof, seeing the other is that which men get out of the letter of the Scripture only, and so have it but by rule. For by the word of God we learn both: and that such knowledge doth better us, shall appear afterwards.

Now, if we will see more clearly what this experience is, consider of it after this manner: Compare it with experimental knowledge in all trades and sciences, what a difference there is betwixt it, and bare and naked skill in the same without experience. So it shall the better appear what this is, in matters which are heavenly and spiritual, in respect of the bare knowledge, that men have by rule or instruction only. He that hath been trained up in an occupation, it may be, he hath got knowledge and skill in his science or trade: but he is not able to use it to the best advantage and his own greatest profit, neither how, where, and when, to buy and to sell, and how to dispose of all things, that he may not decay and grow behind hand, but thrive and prosper. These (I say) and such like, he is ignorant in, and all for want of experience: All which, he that hath been exercised in, and acquainted with, is able to do, as God shall see good to bless him in the same.

Even so it is in the spiritual trade. For a man that hath been taught soundly and plainly out of the word of God, and catechized in the principal points of Christian religion, is able by the help thereof, to make a confession of his faith, and give an account of the hope that is in him: and to answer soundly to questions that shall be put forth to him. But all this is but the knowledge of the letter, if he go no further: and may delight a good man to see it in him, rather, then yield any

great fruit, towards God's kingdom, to himself. But the Christian, who hath had the proof of this knowledge, that is, how it hath been effectual to him: how it hath assured him of his own salvation: reformed and changed him, and cast out the filthiness of heart and life, which was in him before, and so hath wrought in him many other ways; he (I say) that hath experience of this, hath received another manner of blessing then the other, and is like daily to receive much more.

Such a thing is experience: for he considereth, observeth, and applieth the things which he heareth, seeth, and doth, to his own use: and by things past thus duly regarded, he learneth and getteth wisdom to advise and guide him for the present, and the time to come: no otherwise, then the experienced husbandman doth in his calling and dealings. And by this we may gather what experience is. Now to show how far it reacheth, we may understand, that it maketh us wise in all things, which are profitable to godliness, and eternal life: in so much, as our life is little worth if it be not helped by this. For till we begin to mark how true every part of God's word is, and that God doth daily execute that in the world, which he saith in his word, he will bring to pass, we reverence it not, neither regard it, but only in speech and in show: till we mark and observe, how God punisheth the hollow hearted, and the workers of iniquity, we fear not to do ill: and so on the contrary, till we find how sweet and pleasant a thing it is, to be gathered under the Lord's wings, and what a shelter and defense he is to his faithful servants, we make no reckoning of his service, but it is unsavory and unwelcome to us. But the experience of God's dealing toward us, and of the carriage of ourselves toward him, in what course we best prosper and find most rest to our souls, this bringeth the true fear of God, which is the only wisdom. For the due consideration and remembrance of the time past, and God's work therein, is a forcible mean, through his

blessing, to make us go forward better and better in the Christian way. For when we can say, upon good proof and trial, that we have seen that it hath always gone well with such as are upright in heart, and innocent in their lives, and with our selves, when we have walked after the same rule; and that when we have kept ourselves from the defilements of the world, we have seen good days, and lived comfortably: this establisheth us in the same course most firmly and constantly afterwards: and when we have observed, that God hath punished security, an ill conscience, rashness, and willful sinning (as they are very blind that mark not that) this experimental knowledge bringeth great wisdom, in the choice of our ways, and causeth us to take heed to ourselves, that it may go well with us.

So when we are able to say we have in our troubles humbled ourselves to God, confessed our sins, and sought pardon in faith, and had hope to see a good end of it, and patience to bear it, and have (though it seemed very unlike for the time) found and obtained it; this is a clear demonstration to us, that therefore in the like trouble, we shall find the like blessing by the like means using. And this experience never faileth, if we rightly ground it, that is, if that which we have marked to be wrought by God, hath been agreeable to that which in his word hath been spoken by him. This we find to have often stirred up the dear servant of God, David, both to be comforted in his affliction, because before he had so been, and also to be constant in a godly life, because that he had marked that it ever bringeth a peaceable end.

And what marvel should this be to any, who are trained up in the Lord's house? For this we know, that as in all trades or sciences, the beginnings are hardest and fullest of discouragements; so it fareth with Christians, namely, that their first entering's are most doubtful, and fullest of weakness: yet who cannot remember that even then,

God wrought most lovingly for them, and dealt most tenderly with them, when their faith was yet so weak and young, that they could not well discern it? For how hath he kept many of them from sore falls, holden them from manifold and great afflictions, and not brought many of their sins to light at once, least they should have been discouraged (even as he hath promised to regard their weakness) whereas otherwise they must needs have been driven to great extremity?

These and many other such like, why hath the Lord done them, but that his children should mark and observe them, to learn experience by them against the times which shall come after? And that they might safely and boldly promise unto themselves, greater proof of his assistance and fatherly kindness towards them? And why hath he given a good end of their former chastisements when they penitently desire it? Even to this end, that their hope may be strengthened for the times that shall come after: As the Apostle speaketh of himself and other godly people; God hath delivered us, doth deliver us: and we trust in him, that yet hereafter he will deliver us. Also why preserved he them from fearful falls, when they earnestly craved it; or made the way of godliness more easy, then they could have hoped for? But to hearten them on to look more confidently for the like grace and blessing, when they have now received longer proof of God's kindness toward them, and of his keeping promise with them, if they shall seek him in the same dutiful manner that they were wont to do? For the Lord's hand is not shortened that he cannot help, but is nearer to them, as they are better acquainted with him to believe it. So that as men who have found out the way to bring in profit, cannot be dissuaded from it: even so it fareth with these.

But woeful it is, that where so great benefit and gain might be reaped by so small travail, even by marking God's manner of dealing with

his servants: yet that so few should be brought to this wisdom, and persuaded to seek out the best and happiest way, which yet is not hard to them that would gladly find it. For I must speak the truth, and God he knoweth it, that few set themselves about this work to get this experience, when yet they have oft smarted for their foolishness: but for all that they love to lie in it still, more foolish then children, who cannot be made to come nigh the water, when they have once been in peril of drowning: and so they verify the words of Christ, Prov. 1:22. O ye fools, how long will ye love foolishness? Which is the cause, why not only the most part of hearers are dead and cold practicers: but even many of the teachers, though they do boldly utter that which they have read, yet are faint followers of that which they teach: or conceal much of that which they should deliver, because they find the contrary to be done of themselves, which they see, they should teach others; and would shun the reproach of the proverb; Physician heal thine own disease. But they who turn their thoughts, consideration, wisdom, and study, to this, marking what is the blessed course of life, and how it is attained unto: as they shall declare that they are wise; so shall they be sure to find a singular help to godliness, which they shall never repent of travailing for.

It followeth in the next place, that we see, how God hath provided no less help for us in company, which because we have much use of, and occasion to be often in it, therefore least we might possibly return out from it worse than we went into it (as the most companies are such as do make men more corrupt then they were before) therefore the Lord hath taught his people how to carry themselves in all their meetings with others, in such wise, as not only they may shun the harm which is easily gotten therein, but also have much help and furtherance thereby to go better forward in Christian duties. But this



point is handled at large in the next treatise. Therefore I refer the reader thither.

## **CHAP. 10.**

Of prayer and the parts thereof, thanksgiving and request, whereunto is added confession of sins.

Having now made mention of the two first kinds of the private helps, the third followeth, containing the helps which may be used by ones self alone, or with others also: as prayer and reading. Prayer is a calling upon God according to his will: and hath these two parts: thanksgiving, and request; whereunto is added the confession of sins. Thanksgiving is that part of prayer, in which, we being comforted by some benefit, which in favor God bestoweth upon us, are drawn to love and praise him, and show forth the fruits thereof. In the which description we see three duties to be required of us, and three motives or persuasions, to draw us to perform them. I will first mention these latter, and then proceed to the duties. The first motive is knowledge and remembrance of some benefit received or promised us. Which may be seen in the thanksgivings of all God's servants; as in David after that he had received the savory and seasonable counsel by Abigail: and in Abraham's servant, when God had blessed him in his journey to Aram. The same may be said of the leper, when he saw that he was cleansed, after he had made request for it to Christ. And where there is no knowledge and due consideration of some particular mercy, how can there be any true, and hearty thanksgiving, howsoever in words there be a protestation for fashion sake? As in them who say, we must thank God for all, when yet they consider of nothing that moves them thereto.

The second motive to thanksgiving, is joy and gladness of heart for the benefit which we think of, or call to mind: As appeareth by the psalm, in them which returned out of the captivity, saying; When the Lord brought again (that is, turned away) the captivity of Zion (his Church) we became like them that dream: then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with joy. And except we find such sweetness in God's benefits either already received, or by faith embraced, being promised; the duty of thanks can in no good sort be performed: But that is verified which is commonly spoken, that is, a work is untowardly done which is not cheerfully gone about.

The third thing that should move us to this duty of thanks, is that which is most fit to work the foresaid joy, and that is a persuasion, that the benefit, for which we give thanks, cometh to us from God's fatherly love: which is a far greater matter to make us glad, then the benefit itself, which is bestowed on us. For if we should fear that it is sent as a snare to entangle us, or to heap hot coals upon our head, and to make our condemnation the more just, small sweetness should we find therein, but that which would be quenched with that fear, and by an accusing conscience.

As for example, what hearty joy, or sound thanks could that of the Pharisee be, though in tongue he gave the one, and in countenance showed the other, when he had not this persuasion? But God be thanked, it is not so with his beloved ones: but they knowing that their most loving father hath given them his Christ, which is the greatest, doth much more of favor give them all other things, which are of less account; which both rejoice their hearts, when they remember any of these his blessings, and stirreth them up to a much more hearty performing of this duty.

And as these three former things must be found in us to move us to true thankfulness for our comfort: so to make it effectual three duties are required. First, a continuance of our love to God. Secondly, a desire to set forth his glory, and in words to profess and confess his goodness. Thirdly, a further proceeding in obedience, and walking worthy his kindness. For how can we choose but love and set our hearts upon him, when we may see the fruits of his favor on every side, whither soever we turn our selves, and the same every morning renewed? Even as the Prophet saith: I love the Lord, because he hath heard my request, and for his great and many mercies, which there he reckoneth up. So that they, whose love is set upon the gift itself, and the benefit; being little affected towards the giver and bestower of it, how wide soever their mouths are open in giving thanks; they are far from the right offering of thanks to God.

Now if we love the Lord, we cannot but be carried with a fervent desire, that God might be known and believed on by others, that they might come out of darkness: neither can we satisfy ourselves in seeking to advance and magnify him. As we may see in David, who being stirred up by the consideration of God's benefits, had this affection in him, thus declaring the same: What shall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits? As if he should say, Oh, that I knew, and could satisfy myself herein. And where this affection and desire is, can it otherwise be, but that by all good opportunities, there should be an expressing, and an acknowledging of this his goodness? Even as the same person setteth himself down to us for an example, I will praise the Lord, and call upon him with thanksgiving: and elsewhere in the congregation in heart and tongue: and with instruments well tuned and of many kinds.

Now with these before mentioned, if this last property be adjoined, that we walk worthy his kindness, and within holy compass, which is

to do the will of our heavenly father, then do we rightly perform this duty of thanksgiving. The which one, if it be wanting from the rest, maketh them all lame and maimed, and as odious to God, as the mortlings and untimely first borne of the beasts, which were offered to him in sacrifice. And how with our thanksgiving reformation of our lives should go, Moses showeth, by setting down the danger of the contrary, saying: When the Lord thy God hath brought thee into the land, which he sware to thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give thee, with great and goodly cities which thou buildedst not: and houses full of all manner of goods, which thou filledst not: and wells digged, which thou diggedst not: vineyards and Olive trees, which thou plantedst not: and when thou hast eaten and art full, beware least thou forget the Lord (in stead of remembering his kindness and bounty) but fear and serve him. So the Psalmist saith: What doest thou taking my word in thy mouth, either in thanks, prayer, or speaking of it, and hatest to be reformed by it? And these are the three duties, necessarily required to be in true thankfulness.

Thus I have showed what thanksgiving is, and what properties are required in it, to the end it may rightly be performed to God. Now then, if this duty be thus performed of us, in adversity as in prosperity; for so God will have them do, who worship him aright, Job. 27:10, and alone by ourselves, as well as in company with others, that so we may be free from hypocrisy in offering it: must it not needs be a singular help, with the rest, unto godliness? I say, when we shall many times from day today, think upon God's loving kindness, how great it is, and hath been towards us, and find sweetness in his benefits, as being persuaded that we have them in God's favor; when for them, we shall have our hearts enlarged to love the giver, declare his goodness to others with a desire to honor him, and be more ready to our particular duties; when we shall frame ourselves in all estates to this thankfulness: is it not a mighty and

forcible means to mollify the hard heart, and to hold under the sturdy corruptions of it, so that they may be subject to God, yea even when strong provocations do draw to the contrary?

Then we cannot be ignorant that thankfulness is one help, and that not the least, to the continuance of a godly life: whether we understand it of that solemn thanksgiving, which we adjoin ordinarily to our supplications; or that which now and then we do use in a more brief manner by any occasion offered. And this of thanksgiving. With this we are to add supplications, which also contain confession of our sin: all which three are indeed but one action generally, but particularly have every one of them an especial and several use. Therefore it followeth to show, in what sort we should make confession of our sins, and our private requests to God, that they may much more be helps to godliness altogether, when one part, even thanksgiving is so great an help alone.

And first, of confession of sins, as in order it is to be used, next unto thankfulness: and afterwards, of the making or offering up of our requests and suites unto God, and namely, for the remission of sins, with the which, it is ever to be joined. Now this is an acknowledging of ourselves to be guilty, and worthily to have deserved God's wrath, and manifold punishments, for our grievous faults and offenses: and an acknowledging of them also, with a free and humble bewailing of them before the Lord; such as are unknown to us, in a general manner, but those which we do know (according to the nature of them) particularly. And this duty is rightly done and practiced of us: first, when we feel our sins odious, and burdensome to us. Secondly, when we accuse ourselves of them to God. Thirdly, when we confess them to him (having examined our life) and that we stand at his mercy deserving to be condemned. And fourthly, when we abase ourselves thereby, and so are meekened, and our pride abated. In all

the confessions of the servants of God, all these four are to be found; that I may show it at once, and not stand long about every one of them. As in David's confession, after that Nathan the Prophet had accused him, saying, thou art the man, even this great offender, he answered, I have sinned: in which one word, he found and showed all things that are required in a true and penitent confession: that is, that he both had his sin in a detestable execration, accused himself to God of it, confessed that he had justly provoked God against him, and was greatly humbled by it. In the Psalm, if any doubt of this, he may see them particularly described. The same may be said of Daniel his confession in the ninth chapter; and in the Publican's, when he knocking on his breast, and looking down to the ground, as ashamed to look up, said, God be merciful to me a sinner. All these are likewise in the confession of the prodigal son. The first in these words, he came to himself, and entered into consideration of his life past, with himself, whereby he felt his burden so great; that secondly, he cometh and accuseth himself to his father; and thirdly, what he thought of his deserts, may easily be gathered, when he asked not such mercy, as to be counted a son, but thought it a large favor to have the place of an hired servant: which also doth clearly lay forth his abasement.

What manner of confession therefore we should make ordinarily in our prayers to God, by this may be seen: (if it be otherwise framed, that is, out of our own brain God will reject it) and then shall we not (as many do, to their little comfort) coldly confess our sins in general, nor for fashion, but in particular, and those especially, by which we have most offended God. Now this confession being from time to time oft made unto God, shall not suffer us to go far, and lie long in any sin, but hunt it out, before it be warm and nestled in us. And when we see every while, in coming to confess our sins, how we have burden enough of our sin, although we sin not willfully; who

seeth not, but that we shall be much preserved even by confessing them in this manner that I have set down, from dangerous falls and offenses? So that the very confessing of our sins, which is but one branch of our prayer, is of great force to strengthen us in a godly life.

And as for the objection of them, which say, that the oft coming to perform this duty, will make it common, and without force to kill our sin: I answer them thus: God having promised by this and such other helps to chain up the unruliness of our nature, doth grant to his servants (for all the rebellion that remaineth in them) much to prevail against it; so that ordinarily they may find ease by these helps, and a cheerful readiness to the using of them; much more then they, who by custom in earthly matters, find hard things easy.

Thus I having showed how thanksgiving and confession of sin should be used, and being so used, what helps they are to godliness, it remaineth that I speak to the same end, of request making to God: how that ought to be done, that the like fruit may be reaped thereby: Of the which the less shall need to be said, seeing this point is after handled, and more is written of it, then of the former two. Request is that part of prayer, in which we earnestly power out our suites unto God, in contrition of heart, according to his will, with a comfortable hope that through Christ we shall be heard, and therefore forsaking the sin which might hinder our suite. Wherein briefly note these four things necessary to be joined with this duty whensoever we go about it.

The first is, that we show this contrition of heart, by being pressed with feeling our wants, unworthiness, miserable estate, and manifold necessities, earnestly desiring to be pardoned and eased, which shall not be found hard, if our confession of sins be hearty, and according to the rules before mentioned: For he can most freely make request

to God, who can most heartily accuse and complain of himself. And our praying to God, is but cold and counterfeit, when we be not touched with our own vileness, and so consequently, the better feel our necessities, which we desire to have relieved. But if this be, we shall neither pray in lip-labor, which God abhorreth, nor think ourselves too good to wait God's leisure, if at first he grant not our requests, but continue them as he commandeth.

The second is, that we ask of God no other things, then by his word he alloweth us to pray for, and therefore are agreeable to his will; and such as we have a promise to obtain, and that in such sort, as he hath promised them: and so doing, we shall not pray in vain. Therefore the Apostle saith, this assurance we have of him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us. Which rule, as it suffereth us not to hunt after our own desire and will: so it is no small benefit, that whatsoever we stand in need of, asking it according to his will, it shall be given us. And who would desire to have that, which our loving and most provident father doth not see good for us? Which if it content not some, mark what they get thereby: For they ask, but they obtain not, because they ask amiss: and further, they lose all their labor in praying, thinking themselves good Christians if their lips be going, when God in the mean season, counteth their supposed devotion to be but much babbling, being done in ignorance of his will. From this second, ariseth the third, that seeing we have so great encouragement, so precious promises of so many and great good things, as God hath bequeathed to us; therefore we should quicken ourselves to come in faith and confidence, and oft times and cheerfully to this duty. Even as men do come cheerfully, and with good hope go to their approved neighbors in their necessities to borrow, when they have often promised them to lend. And no marvel it is though there be both seldom praying, and untoward going about it, where faith is wanting to set them forward,



and assurance of obtaining, to bring them on, with comfort. And in great wisdom and love, hath God given us leave to rejoice in making our prayers to him, by this believing, that we shall receive somewhat thereby (according to that which he saith in Saint John: Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full ) both because we have many things throughout our life, to make us sad and heavy; and also because we are by natural disposition so slow and unwilling to this duty, and distrustful when we offer it. And if we be not so fully resolved of this, for want of experience, that both we ought, and may with cheerfulness come to pray, and with gladness be occupied in it (considering, he is our most loving and dear father, who cannot forget nor put off kindness toward us) then let the effects of prayer, and the fruits that have been reaped thereby, persuade us of it, which are such, as will easily draw us with delight to use it, though by the flesh, we be as with cords haled backward. Of the which effects of it, I will briefly set down some, and they are especially three.

The first is, that by prayer we are made acquainted (a great word to speak) yea and in a sort familiar with God, and know his mind and will, and how he is affected to us, being admitted to speak to him. The second is, that it giveth life to God's graces in us, which before lay in us half dead; as faith, hope, care of duty, until by the bellows of prayer they be revived in us: for we are dull, forgetful, unprofitable, faint in hope, and our comfort dimmed oftentimes; when yet in, and after prayer, we are well refreshed again, even as the fire is quickened by blowing: as in that worthy example of Queen Ester is to be seen; who being timorous (as we may gather) before prayers made to God, was mightily encouraged and strengthened after prayer, in a most weighty matter. The third effect of prayer is, that it reacheth out to us in our greatest need, the good things and gifts of God which our souls desire; as it is written: Ask, and it shall be given you: yea such things, as we thought sometime had not been to be looked for: joy in

heaviness, light in darkness, and hope for despair, as by the song of Anna, 1. Sam. 2:1,2, after her effectual prayer, 1. Sam. 1:10. But I will end with fourth and last property of prayer; that when we pray we bring not with us the sins, which will turn away the ears of the Lord from hearing us. And these sins are any which be not repented of, but lie in, or nourished in us, secretly at the least, and not renounced: This Solomon confirmeth in these few words when he saith, Who so turneth away his ear from hearing the law, (and so any part of it, being of like and equal authority) even his prayer shall be abominable. And David agreeth with him saying, even as he poured out his requests unto God, if there be any wickedness in my hands (for all my prayer) shall that excuse me, shalt not thou, O Lord, find it not? But when our requests shall be made to God with these properties (for in such manner doth God require them to be offered unto him) the Christian who observeth them, shall reap no small fruit thereby: whether he entreat for remission of his sins, or for any good thing whereof he standeth in need, or against any calamity or burden, wherewith he shall be distressed; yea he shall thereby prevail with God for others, as for himself: and what encouragement think we doth this add to a godly life?

But when all these three parts of God's worship now spoken of, shall reverently and humbly be adjoined together, I mean thanksgiving, confession of sins, and request (which ordinarily in our prayers ought to go one with the other) how much more gainful (think we) are they to the poor Christian soul? Especially seeing by confession of sins, he acknowledgeth himself a guilty person, and debtor to God, that so he may be the slower to run further in debt with him. By making his suites, he declareth, that he is a beggar, and standeth in need of all things, as having nothing of his own (if he know himself well) but sin and filthiness, Revel. 3:17, and by giving thanks he confesseth, that whatsoever he hath, or enjoyeth, he receiveth it of

God. All of them make him to see himself infinitely indebted unto the Lord: his pride to be abated: his heart stirred up to seek unto him, and enlarged to love and obey him. And if he be fallen, this prayer of faith will raise him up: if he be heavy, this will comfort him: if he be dull, this will quicken him. Oh, who can reckon up the infinite and marvelous commodities that come of prayer, if it be accompanied of the forementioned properties?

Therefore I conclude, that seeing it is a present remedy to the oppressed heart, a preserver of the godly mind, a giver of strength to the weak, an especial means to make a man fit to live in every estate, wherein God hath set him, &c. I conclude (I say) that it is a strong and mighty help to the godly life. For pray well, and live well, and keep thyself in case fit to perform this duty, as thou hast been directed, and thou shalt not need to fear in thy life, any great annoyance. But how this, with some other of the helps, are to be brought into use every day, that the fruit of it may be more certain, shall be set down in the next treatise of the daily direction, which is the place fit for it.

## **CHAP. 11.**

Of reading.

The next help to godliness is reading (as oft as may be) the Scriptures and approved good authors. The which exercise and duty, that the Christian, whom I go about to inform, may find it a help to the furthering of him in godliness together with the other, some direction I will give him about the same. And first, seeing it is to be used, and that as oft of everyone, as conveniently maybe, this is one caution, that it be not neglected: and the book of God laid aside, and covered with cobwebs, or not so much as in our houses at all. For let

the best know this, that if they use not reading, they shall find much more incumbrance in their life, unsavoriness, unquietness, unfruitfulness, and uncheerfulness, with other such, yea though they use other helps.

And secondly the same in effect I say of them which read seldom, even when they must needs, for fear or shame. Both these faults are too commonly committed even of Christians: and that because some of them for following the world one way or other, can find no leisure thereunto: othersome taking their full scope in play, and pleasures, cannot attend to such sad matters, whiles the other are so welcome to them. Others through idleness, sloth and swarms of vain cogitations or dangerous lusts carrying them, or through gross ignorance, needles, and idle talk, neglect so good a work, and necessary duty: whereas, if they had learned to make conscience of this duty, they might shake off much of noisomeness, by watching their opportunities, whereby they should not need to fear, but that their labor therein, should be plentifully rewarded.

Thirdly, seeing books, which are fit for the building of them up in godliness, must be read of them, therefore they must not bestow their time in reading filthy, lewd and wanton books, no nor needless and unprofitable books, the reading of many such being but wearisome to the flesh, and vanity: much less superstitious pamphlets, and Machivels blasphemies (which it is a shame should be suffered to come into men's hands) nor the subtle devises and deceitful dreams and errors of the Church of Rome, except they be able for their sound judgment to discern them, that so they may be the better able to detest, and give others warning of them.

But the books which are to be read, are the holy canonical scriptures, and other sound and godly authors, as I have said. Wherein this as a

fourth rule is to be observed, that in the reading of the Scriptures, they read not here and there a chapter (except upon some good occasion) but the bible in order throughout, and so, as oft as they can; that so by little and little they may be acquainted with the histories, and the whole course of the scriptures (having before the grounds of Christian religion laid) and so may have the more comfortable and liberal use of them.

And in reading of other good books, they are to be counseled rather to read someone or two well penned, either of the whole Christian religion, or any particular argument, and matter, and them often, rather than a leaf of one and a chapter of another, as idle readers use to do for novelties sake. Often, I say, because a good book is of the most part of Christians little seen into, at once or twice reading over, much less the use of the doctrine of it reaped and enjoyed of dull heads, slippery memories, and weak practicers, such as it is too well known, that the most Christians are. And therefore the most not having leisure to read many books, shall find most profit by diligent going over of the same often, making their choice of the best and necessariest, by the help of their faithful teachers.

Now as concerning the manner of reading; it must be with an hearty good will to learn and profit thereby, desiring God to prepare us with reverence: to lighten our understandings, that we may conceive that which we read, and settling ourselves for the time of our reading to be attentive, and so to abandon the wandering of the heart, as much as may be: the which will be the easilier done in reading, if it be well watched over (as hath been said before) in our course of living. Also it is duly to be regarded, that we apply that which we read, wisely to ourselves (seeing all that is contained in the Scriptures, is written for our instruction and comfort ) as persuading ourselves that all precepts of duty and good life, are set down to direct us (not others

only) to the practice of the same: that all sin is forbidden us, and that all the general promises which we read to be made to the Church, are to be believed of us, whether they appertain to this present life, or to the life to come; and the comforts that accompany them.

Likewise, that all exhortations and admonitions quicken and stir us up from coldness, deadness, and drowsiness: and all reprehensions to check us for faults escaped: and all threats to fear our boldness, and appall our security, which is too easily and readily kindled in us, that so we may make that use of them, which the Apostle requireth when he saith, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable to teach, convince, to correct, and instruct in righteousness: and thereof in matters as well concerning God as men; and amongst men, all particular kinds: and therefore Prince and subject, noble and base, men and women: and more particularly in families, husbands and wives; parents and children, masters and servants. Thus to read, that thereby we may be made fit unto every good work, and to glorify God thereby, is undoubtedly to make our reading, as it is appointed of God an especial help and means to grow forward in a godly life: and therefore we are commanded to search the Scriptures: and (with the godly people of Berea) to compare our hearings, and our readings of them together. For reading is much commended to be one of the three duties that make us happy, the Apostle saying thus: Blessed is he that heareth, and readeth, and keepeth the contents of this book.

But this one thing I cannot omit, that the benefit and comfort of this exercise of reading being so great, and the substance of the Scriptures being so brought to light as it is, and such variety of good books being granted us of God; that yet, even such as look after eternal life delight so little in them. I speak not of the profane and unruly, whom nothing will move to read, no nor so much as to hear

Sermons, till God make them see how they have deceived themselves. But I am sure, it is one special cause, why heart is taken from many learned and godly men to set out any new works in print, seeing the professors of the Gospel do bestow so little labor and time in reading of those which are extant already.

And herein these two things, I think meet to add, in regard of some Christians; that such as have not the gift of reading, may endeavor to follow the foresaid rules, by using the help of others: exhorting all by their loss and discommodity to have reading in greater reckoning, then it is with most at this day. The second is, that besides the former rules, such as have better helps of understanding, memory and leisure, do, besides their public hearing, note their doubts, and as they shall have opportunity, seek resolution of them, at their learned pastors hands, or of some others: and mark the coherence of the Scripture, how it hangeth together: and the agreement that one place hath with another, that thereby that which seemeth dark in one, is made easy in another. This shall suffice to have said, for making some better use of reading, then commonly men do. And though there are other things besides these, which the learner may take profit by: yet they being more out of the reach of the greatest number of Christians, they do not so nearly nor necessarily concern them. And it must be remembered, that I propound not to say, as much as may be gathered together about reading, but how it may be profitably used to help the Christian to be fruitful in a godly life. And that which I have said, is available thereunto.

For he that shall consider, how many ways the conscience is appeased, the judgment enlightened and enlarged, the heart persuaded, the memory relieved, the affections moved; and in a word, the whole man drawn by that which he may read, shall not need to doubt how great the benefit of reading, together with the

other helps, is. And that it being used as oft as possibly it may, in such manner as hath been prescribed, and so many good things drunk in and received of us, as we shall meet with in our reading; who doubteth but it shall be a singular help and furtherance with the rest, to a godly and Christian life? For a mind well-seasoned before, shall be undoubtedly better seasoned and refreshed, when it shall usually and oft drink of the water of life, out of the sweet fountain of God's word by reading. And of the help of reading: and so of all the ordinary means both public and private, whereby a true Christian continueth a godly life, and groweth to further ripeness and perfection therein, thus much be said.

## **CHAP. 12.**

Of the extraordinary helps.

Now follow the extraordinary helps, which are not commonly nor daily in use, but sometime, and that according to the extraordinary occasions which the Lord offereth. And these are especially two: first, solemn thanksgiving: and secondly, fasting, with prayer more than usual adjoined. The first is when in some rare and unlooked for deliverance out of desperate danger, we do by the commandment of God, and examples of the godly before us, in a most fervent manner, yield praise to God for the same, and rejoice heartily in the remembrance and consideration of it, tying ourselves (as it were) in a renewing of our holy covenant, more firmly to the Lord, and testify both these by signs of unfeigned good will to our brethren.

All which are to be seen most clearly and lively in that famous example of Hester and Mardocheus, that I mention no other, for brevity sake: who being with the rest of God's people in those countries, marked out, and as sheep appointed, by Haman's subtlety



and cruel malice, to be slain; did yet by prayer and fasting obtain deliverance, when to man's judgment, all hope was past: and not that only, but also their hearts desire against their adversaries, with great favor of the King (whom God had made of an heavy enemy a mighty friend) and much wealth and prosperity: whereupon they caused a day and time to be appointed, in the which the Lord might be praised; and they might express their rejoicing, and send portions one to another, to testify their love unto them.

And this is that solemn thanksgiving, which I call one of the extraordinary helps to set us forward in godliness: which of all God's people by the like occasion is to be offered up to God, differing (as ye see) apparently from this duty daily performed, as in fervency of the spirit; so in other solemnities: beside a longer time of continuing the same. This duty (when the occasion of it, belonging to a whole Church, is publicly performed) ought to be accompanied with the preaching of the word, to quicken the assembly to the more lively professing of their thankfulness, accordingly as their solemn feasts under the law, were with an holy convocation. And if the cause of this extraordinary help be private concerning someone person alone, or a family, or some few, then it is to be offered in private of them (whom this great benefit concerneth) with Psalms, and praising's of his name, speaking of his works, and reading Scriptures tending to that end: as Psal. 105,106,107.

And because I find one place very fit for this purpose, which teacheth a most right manner of the practice of this duty, whether we shall be occasioned publicly or privately to do the same, I thought it very expedient here to put in the same: which manner of praising God was appointed by the man of God, David, at the setting up of the Ark of God in the tabernacle. Some of the words are these: Praise the Lord, and call upon his name; declare his works among the people:

sing unto him, sing praise unto him, talk of all his wonderful works: Rejoice in his holy name: let the hearts of them that seek the Lord, rejoice. And this of solemn thanksgiving.

The other extraordinary help is fasting, joined with most fervent prayer. And this is a most earnest profession of deep humbling ourselves, in abstinence with confession of sins and supplications (for the greatest part of the day at the least) to God, to turn away some sore calamity from us, or for obtaining of some especial blessing. This description in few words I will lay open for their cause, who perhaps have not read nor heard much of this exercise of fasting, neither have books at hand to help them to the right use of it: I say we must be deeply humbled, and make earnest profession of it, more than in the ordinary abasing of our selves. For though as oft as we do pray, and confess our sins, we ought to do them heartily, and deeply: yet neither in the like continuance of time, nor in the same measure of fervency can they always be, as at and in this exercise, they ought to be.

Secondly I add, that with this; abstinency must be adjoined: I mean thereby, that we must deprive ourselves herein of the lawful pleasures and liberties of this life, as meats, drinks (more than for necessity) costly apparel, earthly dealings (which yet at other times are free for us, to enjoy) thereby declaring, that we have by our sins made ourselves unworthy of them. And thirdly, in that I say it must be done the most part of the day, that is, to the end that by this long time of our humiliation and abasement, our hearts may be more cast down, and thoroughly touched with our distressed estate, then in a shorter time they are like to be. Fourthly, supplications, which contain our suites and confession of sins, are added, to teach us, that the chief part of this exercise consisteth therein. Fifthly, in that this is done for the removing of some great calamity, that is to be

understood, either of some sore affliction outwardly hanging over us, or the whole Church, or already upon us; or for some grievous sin committed, or long lien in of us. The which when weaker means remove not from us, these are enjoined us of the Lord, to deliver us from them, wholly or in part, or else to stay us, that we may rest ourselves on God, that his grace shall be sufficient for us.

And here we must know, that to be required, which I said to be in thanks, whether private or public, that to enable us to this duty the rather, we must in the one, use the benefit of sermons, and fit scriptures to stir us up hereunto, and in the other to meditate of the like scriptures privately, for the well carrying of ourselves through that so weighty a business: but in both, let this be regarded, that we take them not in hand, except we come in true and unfeigned repentance, which as surely, as we bring thither: so sure we may be, that God will be with us there, and hear us, which will make the whole action more savory, and the end of it to be with comfort, which is the right manner of taking it in hand. Now therefore the nature and quality of this exercise being in some sort laid out unto us, as the former was, if we duly weigh the force and use of them both in their proper kind, namely, how the one raiseth us to a joyful recording of God's wonderful kindness: the other bringeth us love, for our own vileness, more especially remembered: both of them do exceedingly draw our hearts in more love and obedience to God, who can deny, that they both, in the time, wherein they are to be used even as a long time after, are most effectual means to set us forward in the godly life?

To say more of the means and helps, I have not thought it expedient. Therefore to end this whole treatise of the helps, these few cautions I would wish to be had of thee, the diligent reader, (to the end thou mayest have the right use of them) namely to understand them well,

and consider thoroughly of them, and of the commodity, which they may bring: and so with a quiet and meek heart set upon them, in that manner that thou hast them set down unto thee: And encourage thyself hereunto by this reason, that seeing someone of them hath so great force, to the well framing of the heart and life (each in his kind) then all of them together, being so used, must needs bring a more large and liberal blessing that way. But as they are precious and have an excellent end, so hold still that account and estimation of them, and use them with all high reverence, as frailty will permit, and not for fashion (as the counsel of flesh will be) to make the best things vile and common in a short time. Neither give place to weariness and slackness in using of them, either in the first entrance, or after longer continuance: yet if by unawares, or any other way, these faults escape, be diligent and ready to espy them, and hide them not, but checking thy corrupt heart, confess it to the Lord in secret, and he will hear thee and forgive thee; and then set upon the use of the forementioned helps, freshly and savorly again as thou diddest before.

There remaineth only this, at what time, so far as we may know it, we should use them, and which of them should be used every day: and which, otherwise; which is a point most needful to be known. But this requiring another place, cannot conveniently be done here, but shall follow in the next treatise of the daily direction.

The end of the third treatise.

## **THE FOURTH TREATISE,**

DIRECTING THE BELIEVER UNTO A DAILY PRACTICE OF THE  
CHRISTIAN LIFE.

## CHAP. 1.

Of the sum, order, and parts of this treatise.

Now that I have showed who is a true believer, and next, described the godly life, in the second part of this book; and have set down last of all, the helps and means y which a Christian groweth in the same: it might seem that any servant of God having these three before him, should need no other direction to help to the practicing of this godly life, but might easily do the same. And so should I think (having been once of that mind) but that I have perceived by diligent marking and experience, that it is seldom seen and hardly found so. Generally (I confess) it is obtained: but particularly it is with them, as with the surgeon, who having learned what is a good medicine for a dangerous sore, can lay it to; but having not particular skill how to prepare the sore, how to diet the party, and when and how to apply the medicine, doth long keep him at one stay, or sometime better, sometime worse, but healeth him not; neither doth by degrees bring it to any good estate: so the Christian who hath only some knowledge how and by what means he must grow in godliness, and resist the devil, and overcome his sin, shall find it hard and awke in particulars, and on one day as well as another to do it with peace, except he have full resolution as well as knowledge and skill how, to use and apply the means every day to the diligent observing of his ways, both at home and abroad, that he may have the testimony of a good conscience, and rejoicing thereby.

And this is it, which I mean in this treatise, to acquaint the reader with, namely, that the godly life, which is to be continued by the many helps before set down, is neither left to men sometime to be practiced, and at other times may be neglected, nor generally (which is far off from God's meaning and will) but particularly in all their

actions, and every day, and throughout the day, to be looked unto and regarded. This is my meaning, and that which I aim at in this present treatise: which is thought of many to be too strict a tying of men to duty, who are so given to seek carnal liberty: and it is counted strange that they should be holden within bounds every day and hour, who are not wont to call themselves to any great account through the whole week or more: who if they be reproved never so justly once in a year; for it is to be feared, that few reproofs are used (to such a point the world is come) they count them nice and too holy which rebuke them, they are so little used to it: Will they not (think we) strain hard to cast off this yoke of watching and observing their lives, and (as they shall see cause) to find fault with themselves throughout every day?

I have had experience how hardly such have been able to hear a kind and friendly rebuke for foolish jesting, swearing, unseemly talking, &c. but they have counted it preciseness: there is no doubt, but they will impatiently bear it, to have their whole bad course controlled and brought within compass. It is out of question therefore (I say) that both such as I have here spoken of, and many better than they, and which have the Christian life in more reverence, then many such, having given themselves much liberty in their lives, will think it strange that every day care should be had over their hearts and ways. But why think they so; but for that partly through ignorance and security, and partly through custom in both, they have long been estranged and held back from it, and so are unacquainted with it? Also they see few examples to lead them to it. Among whom, yet (God be blessed) there are some, yea numbers, I am well assured, who if they knew better, would embrace it.

Such therefore, as are ready to cast any mists of fleshly objections before the eyes of the simple, and most of all to put out their own

light, that thereby they may be hindered from seeing the pathway of this Christian direction, to the end they may not walk in it, I exhort to hear me patiently: To whom, as to all other who shall regard it, I offer a clearer knowledge of the will of God, which hath long been smothered by the bold contempt of some, and a safer way to their own happiness, then is commonly found of the most Christians, that is, that as I said, they must every day look to their ways and lives, and settle themselves constantly therein, and not think they do well till they do so, but hold it for a great offense to God and a bold tempting of him (howsoever they offer him some manner of service:) and therefore shall pay dear for it, when they dare let any one day in the week pass by them without good regard had of pleasing God.

This was the principal end of my writing, even to help to bring the Christian life into practice, and consequently into price and estimation with professors; yea with some good persons and people, more than it is. For though in word many profess themselves followers of Christ, and that they ought so to do; yet with their deeds they deny him, and the power of godliness also. And likewise though the Christian life be in some account with others, yet it cometh to pass, that it is not in chiefest reckoning with them above other things, without the which it is never practiced to any purpose. Which is one great cause, why both many weak Christians are not better than they be, and why the bad and unreformed persons please themselves in their ignorance and loose estate, and make so slow haste (as they do) to amend and be changed.

For they see in many hot professors, that there is no even and constant course kept in the practice of godliness one time as well as another, and in one thing as in another. Generally we say all (as I set down before) we must live godly: but in particular the godly life is seldom and hardly found, even amongst those who say so. And as for

any certain time when this should be practiced (as no time should be free from some part of it) though we affirm that it should be so to the end of our life, it is so little considered, that it is most clear that sundry even good men do shine but dimly, and are too often times, yea and too grossly, out of the way. And as there are many which do not honor God by a good conversation (as they know they might) if they would bend themselves to it (for this point of wisdom is easy to him that would understand, Pro. 8:9) so a great number (who gladly would) cannot tell how to go about it.

For many a one may approve of a Christian life, and give good precepts to another, finding them in the word, which he never followed nor practiced in his own life. And thus, whiles it is not found nor seen by experience, what is the beauty, fruit, and comfort of this Christian life, but amongst few, and they for the most part not of credit with the men of the world, to persuade that which they know, it lieth dead in a manner: and so God's exceeding kindness in appointing us such an happy and sweet way to his kingdom, is not only not enjoyed, but of the most counted wearisome and tedious. I say more, it is vile and in no reckoning nor account with many, without which they forgo a great part of their happiness. It is not missed among men, nor asked after, though it be the best of all other.

It might worthily grieve him who knoweth the gain, beauty, sweetness, and honor of it, to see so many hunt after all these, where they cannot be come by; and if they be attained, yet as a flower they soon fade and are gone: and to bestow no labor for them, where they may all be had, and constantly kept and enjoyed. And whereas it is granted, that one day in the godly life is better than a thousand elsewhere: yet what courtesy is amongst men who should begin to make proof of it? And what holding back is there, least they should do too much? And therefore that this Christian life may be brought



into some more estimation and reckoning with men, then for a long time it hath been with the most, I have taken some little pain to unfold and lay out this happy estate, and to teach a more sound use of it, then the most that profess, have acquaintance with, by showing how it is to be made an every days work, and to be brought into daily practice, that so the whole being seen in her parts, everything in it may be better perceived and discerned, with the manifold privileges and benefits thereof; as a great house, when the several rooms of it, are with their furniture particularly viewed, and not confusedly beheld.

For by the faithful observing of our lives through the day, and taking heed thereto by the help of such rules, as God layeth out to us in his word, we shall see ourselves carried through the diverse and manifold actions of the day, safely and peaceably; seeing the following of a well ordered course bringeth greatest peace and safety: and thereby we shall learn what to avoid, and what to embrace, and that with such ease and freedom from unquietness and danger, that we shall say, we never saw the fruit of godliness so sweet and great, nor the true serving of God (though to the flesh a yoke, as it is meet it should be) so easy, safe, and comfortable. And thus having declared what I intend and propound in this treatise, with some reason thereof, I will show how I mean to handle this point.

First therefore I will by good proof declare, that the believer and true Christian must have direction for his life every day, and that God's word doth lay it out to him, and leaveth it not to himself, to serve God by the great, nor the gross, as we use to speak.

Secondly, I will show what this direction is, and what are the parts thereof.

Thirdly, I will help him against all thoughts of counting it too tedious, by showing how much to be desired it is, yea profitable, and comfortable.

And fourthly, I will add an enlargement of the direction and parts thereof, more briefly handled in the second point of this treatise. But I will say no more of the daily directing of a Christian in general at this time, nor of the fruit and comfort that it bringeth, nor in the commendation of it: it shall speak for itself, what benefit the faithful practice of it doth bring to everyone, as he shall endeavor to perform this duty carefully; and for that I have appointed in the third part of this treatise to speak more particularly of the benefit of it.

## **CHAP. 2.**

Of the first reason, why there ought to be a daily direction to guide the believer.

Therefore to come to the first point, because it is like it will be denied to be necessary, by many, whose practice little savoreth of it, I will set down some reasons to prove the necessity of it, namely, that we ought to bring the godly life into every days practice: and that not at adventure, as every man thinks best, before he have learned how to go about it, but to be directed therein by some certain rules in the word of God, without which, he shall fail exceedingly, whosoever he be. These I will set down, both to take away all scruple and doubt from the weak Christian, that I go about to draw him after any novelty, whereof God is not author (though I fear it is somewhat too new to most men:) and to set before the eyes of the careless and profane, how far they are off from that which they think they have: and I hope to them that have well begun already, it shall not be unprofitable, though I know that the urging of this (that it must be

looked to every day) will be so unsavory to many (with whom little godliness will serve) that the devil will open the mouths of such, to disgrace and discredit (as much as lieth in them) whatsoever is more than they are willing to follow, till they most disgrace themselves among those who are godly indeed.

And first to show, that God's word doth direct the Christian believer, how he should live every day (and therefore that it is to be known and practiced) all that list, may easily see, by that which the Apostle Saint Peter writeth, namely, that we (who call God father) should pass the whole time of our dwelling here in fear: and that we should spend as much time as remaineth of our life, not after the lust of men, but after the will of God. Now therefore if we be commanded to live in the fear of God and according to his will, the whole time of our dwelling here, unto our end; then are we commanded to do this every part of this whole time; and consequently every day, and throughout the day, as we may attain to it: Whereunto belongeth that which is written to the Hebrews 3:12. Take heed that there be not at any time, in any of you an evil heart, therefore not any day.

To the which most lively agreeth that which we read in the song of Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, Luke 1:74,75, who testifieth that, God had sworn that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies might serve him in holiness and righteousness before him all our days without fear. By all which it followeth, that we should call in our hearts and affections from carrying us disorderedly, and against duty every day; and in one day as well as another to consecrate ourselves to God, and according to our knowledge to walk with him, whatsoever our works, dealings, or business be, that therein we may keep our peace with him, and declare that we fear and honor him thereby: which is it, that I contend for, and seek to draw God's people unto, and would

think I had obtained a great matter at their hands, if we agreed and consented herein.

For it is too manifest, that this is far off from the very persuasion of many, who are yet to be hoped well of, and yet rest in this, that so as the sabbath be passed in religious exercises, it is not so great a matter, if the other days be parted betwixt God and them: I mean, they look not to be called to so narrow a reckoning, as to see their words and works, especially the thoughts of their hearts, to be framed after the will of God. Nay the Sabbath itself is far enough off from being had in due regard, even of the most which go for Christians, but is spent idly and unprofitably, if not in worldliness or vanity, especially a great part of it, even almost as much of it, as is free from public exercises; and yet I would even that part of the day were not justly to be complained of, that men did present themselves reverently before the Lord to their profit when they come together, 1. Cor. 11:17. But what may then be looked for of such upon other days?

It is too manifest, that it is not so much as settled in the judgment of many which are of the forwarder sort, that every day our greatest care should be, how God is pleased and served in it, and that it ought to be our chiefest work: and yet where men think so; how many make conscience of it, or show, that they dare do no other but hold fast and nourish their good desires to serve God, day by day, one day as another; so that there might be felt and found some agreeableness betwixt every days service, the one and other, except it be to make them all alike in security? For then there should not be in many, that profess with the best, such bold taking of liberty, on some days to be secure and licentious; and others, who bear show above many, should not have so many apparent and foul blemishes, and yet mixed with sundry good actions (which [unpleasantly] witnesseth, that no even nor constant course is sought after of them) that I say nothing

of their many secret wounds of conscience. All these and such like patterns in Christians (as they are hoped to be) do prove, that few are acquainted with this, to look to be guided in the whole course of their lives by the word of God, one day as well as another: and therefore that they go astray dangerously, seeing God's word directeth us how to live every day.

### **CHAP. 3.**

Of the second reason, of a daily direction consisting of two branches.

But let us proceed to other reasons: Therefore, for further proof thereof, I say, that seeing it is commanded us in the scriptures that we keep a certain course in serving God, and walk in a certain and plain beaten way, namely, after the word; and the same course is commanded there also, to be daily and every day: it followeth therefore, that the Christian life is a certain, daily, and every days directing of us in our way, and not an uncertain, general, and confused living according to knowledge when we think good. By a certain direction I mean, not that the self-same particular actions and duties should be every day, but yet all evil avoided every day, and such good done as in our calling and life shall be occasioned.

And seeing it is so, if we dispense with ourselves to lay aside this care any day (as though it were allowable before God, and lawful for us so to do) even that liberty taking is our sin, and that intermitting of duty any such day is a breaking off of our course, and a going out of the way, even into cross paths and by-ways; wherein the least danger, is to return back again: Which if it were but the loss of one days journey (especially when we go about any matter of weight) would be no small grief, especially, when our business is weighty and requireth speed; and therefore much more in this Christian course, being the

high way to heaven, from whence when we have strayed willingly, we cannot easily come into the way again, but rather go further to our exceeding hurt and danger. This with much inconvenience besides, will follow, if the word of God requiring a daily walking with him after such rules as he giveth us, we notwithstanding shall not regard them, but walk at random; and some day frame ourselves thereunto, and some day not at all: or one day keep compass, and another day none: or be well occupied in some part of it; and in the other, do what we list.

But for proof of both points of this reason somewhat is to be said, that so weighty a matter, and so hardly persuaded to many (namely, that every day we are to follow some certain direction for the well ordering of our lives throughout the same) may not depend upon my bare report and credit.

For the first point therefore, that a Christian must be directed in his whole life, and therefore may not be left to his own discretion and government, that which is written in the Psalm doth clearly prove it: when a question was put forth by David the man of God in the person of a young man (who of all other is hardliest kept in order) for the edifying of the whole Church, saying: By what means may a young man, who hath had his sins pardoned, cleanse his ways afterward, that so he may be blessed? He answereth the question himself, thus: Even by taking heed thereto according to thy word, O God. And as he taught this in doctrine, so he brought his own example in the seven verses following, to show that he sought to prove himself happy the same way. And this all will grant, that God's word must be our guide: in general terms this will be affirmed of the most, but what is this which they say?

For they object through the ignorance that is in them, and other infirmities carrying them, as a whirlwind, that they are not to be urged to follow this word of God so particularly; for it distracteth them sore, but every man in the state he is in (they say) is to carry himself, as he thinks good in his common actions and business: they hope men be no children, to be appointed what they should do: when yet, God ceaseth not to sound this in our ears continually, 1. Cor. 10. Whether we eat or drink, &c. So that I may well answer them that God hath not only left his Scriptures among us, to the end we should in such a loose manner look after them, and fall into gross errors for not knowing them, and so become nothing the better for them: but he hath taught us to draw (as it were) a copy, and a certain platform for our lives out of the same, the poor, the rich; the old, the young; the married and the unmarried: all are (I say) to draw out of them, direction for their use.

And what other thing is contained in the words of the Prophet? For in saying that we must take heed to our ways, that is, our course of life and the actions thereof, doth he except any one more than another? So that it is manifest both by the doctrine of the word of God, as also by the examples thereof, that not only there ought to be a general guiding of God's people by the word, but also a particular trying of their ways thereby, and that this ought to be as a trade to be followed in one point as in another, according to the knowledge of everyone, and therefore to be made an ordinary course, to seek to have direction in all things. So that in the more actions of our lives, that we are ignorant and to seek, whether we do them lawfully or no; the more we must see our debt to God, and find fault with our selves, that we may see the greater need to sue for pardon, which few do see. And therefore are the particular duties set down almost in every epistle, both which all Christians ought to perform, and the contrary sins, that they may see according to the occasions offered, how to

employ themselves: and also more specially of men and women; old and young; rich and poor; masters and servants; both inward affections, and external actions: all which, to what end serve they, or why should they have been set down, but to teach this, that men must tie themselves shorter, and deny many noisome liberties, which now they take and run after: and also to teach, that every part of a Christians life requireth direction, that he must shun that which is natural (I mean his own) and be guided by that which is spiritual, namely, by the word of God.

And therefore it is not to be counted as a common sin, but as the head of many sins, that (as though the Scriptures were among us but for fashion, or for the deciding of some rare and hard doubts, and controversies in religion, which is but one use of them) the most think themselves by their natural wit and skill, able to direct their ways: which opinion with their practice, what doth it differ from that which is written of the Heathen Gentiles? God in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, Act. 14:16. And this be said for the proof of the first part of this former reason: namely, that all their actions must be squared after the rule of God's word, throughout their life.

The second part of this reason, namely, that it ought to be daily and every day, and so through the day, the saying of the Lord doth clearly prove: Blessed is the man that feareth always. And again, 1. Cor. 10:31. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do else, do all to the glory of God. And to Joshua, 1:8. Thou shalt meditate and exercise thy mind in this book of the law day and night: as if he should say, early and late, all times of the day, that his heart being well seasoned with the sweet savor of knowledge, his tongue might utter the same, and he might be exercised by the help thereof, in the manifold actions of his life. S. Paul also when he writeth of the widow that



should be chosen to look to the poor, describeth her by this one note, whereby a good Christian is discerned amongst men, namely, if she have been daily given to every good work.

And he whom it may well beseem us to follow, did not only make it his daily trade to be directed by the doctrine of God's word, but even through the day did the same, dividing (as it were) the day into one good doing or other, for these are his words: Oh Lord, what a love have I to thy law? All the day long is my meditation in it, that is, I am musing still how I may please thee, whatsoever my actions are, which I go about; Again, Every day will I praise thee: Even so (if it may be) let us be doing good, and that in an holy and right manner every day, and when we cannot; yet let us avoid and shun evil. But if thou wilt do neither, nor endeavor after the same constantly from day today, then renounce God's word, and do what thou lustest.

And why should not men's hearts be daily given to the Lord, who is most worthy of them? What have we to do in the day more necessary, as it shall appear one day to all, who now will take no knowledge of it? Weigh what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding, that in thy heart and life thou mayest every day serve him: doth the holy Ghost, Prov. 4:23, and 25:25, when he saith, Keep thy heart with all diligence; and again, let it be in the fear of the Lord continually, doth he (I say) mean any certain time, or one day, and not every day? So when rules for praying are given, are they not to direct us in all our prayers forever? If thou sayest, why is this then so strange to men? I say, first naturally men desire to satisfy God with a little, and soon to have done with him, and few will weigh particularly and daily, what they ought to be, and how to walk one day, as well as another, but are content to go the easiest way to work (as they think) and slubber up their sins: and are therefore never long confident in, nor bold with God, as they might be, and as some others also of his dear children

be, and they themselves also perhaps sometime have been. Whereas if it were the matter which is in account with them, who doubteth but that it would be daily looked to.

Again, if ye say, why are we troubled with these novelties now, more than in times past? I say, men are content to have such things to be novelties unto them, with which they desire not to be acquainted: for else, these are not novelties in the Scriptures, and that is seen, seeing there are diverse, who, as they have learned it to be the will of God, that all good duties, as they may, should every day be practiced: so they do carefully and conscionably prune off that behavior in the day, which could not well be thought upon and remembered at the evening, without an unwelcomed wound and accusation. For what can less be gathered out of the Scriptures before alleged, then that Christians should be daily given to every good work, that is, to aim thereat, though when they have done all, they may find themselves to be much behind hand, and unprofitable servants?

And what meaning else hath this Scripture? Herein I exercise and occupy myself, that I may have a good conscience both before God and men always, that is, (I take it) one time as well as another: and therefore much more one day as well as another, seeing it reacheth further, that is, even to one part of the day as well as the other. The which if it can be done, except a man do tie himself to take heed to one, as well as to another, I know not what to make of it. And if he had meant herein, but a general looking to his conscience, he could as easily have said and left out the words (before God and men) which include both inward and outward actions: likewise, the word (always) and to have restrained it to sometimes. The like saying is in another chapter: To the which thing hoped for, or to the which promise made to our fathers, our twelve tribes serving God day and night always, do trust to come. He saith not barely that they served

God (which all will grant ought to be) but that they looked to it, day and night, even early and late, yea and always, that is to say, constantly, and with continuance.

And as these and such like Scriptures do prove that a godly life should be always and every day: so in other places of the word, the same thing is set down in another manner, as by that in the Psalm may be gathered: where the Prophet expresseth it by the means and helps, whereby such a life is led, that is, by prayer and praises, saying thus: every day, or according to the Hebrew words, <H&G> on every day, I will bless thee and praise thy name forever and ever. So that howsoever few aim at it, that they may by their own experience have the proof of it; yet it is evident by the Scriptures, that it ought to be thus, which is the thing that I have taken in hand to prove, that there may be more conscience made of it among the godly hereafter. Therefore if the Scriptures commend unto us a certain course to walk in with God, and a particular directing of our lives (of what calling or estate soever we be, according to his word) and further requireth the same to be daily kept and followed of us (as hath been showed) then Christians must be guided by some daily direction in the leading of their lives.

## CHAP. 4.

Of the third reason of the daily direction.

Furthermore, if so many parts of a daily direction, as will sufficiently direct a man, be enjoined in the word of God, to be daily used, then a certain and daily direction is commanded of God: but the first is manifest and clear: therefore the latter cannot be denied. Now for proof of this, that so many parts of direction, as may well guide a Christian through the day, are set down in the word of God, it is clear: for we are directed there, how to begin the day, how to proceed in the several actions of the same, and how to end it, I exclude not any one. We are directed also how to carry ourselves in company, how alone, how at home, how abroad: how to bear troubles when they come, and to prepare ourselves for them before they come: and how to use prosperity, as health, friends, peace, liberty, goods, and whatsoever blessings besides, God shall any day bestow upon us.

In all these (I say) with other such, we are directed in the word of God, and how we may every day, as well as someone, serve God in them, as occasion shall be offered, which shall more clearly be seen afterwards in sundry particulars. Which if it be so, what ordinary actions in any lawful calling are to be done of a Christian through the day, but God hath in his word guided him how to do them, in such wise, as he by the help thereof, may with peace and comfort bring it to an end: and contrariwise, he that knoweth his will therein, and walketh not after the same, shall neither find peace in his life, nor happiness after. Which, if it were duly weighed and considered, would keep Christians in another and that more safe, well ordered, and heavenly course, then they now are which know it not, or have not conscience to seek experience of it: whereas without it, many,

who might bring great glory to God by their lives, and themselves live very sweetly; yet because they are strangers from such a daily course keeping, do neither of both, or at least, very meanly: and yet because they have no acquaintance with any better, are not content to be disquieted, and roused out of that unprofitable course wherein they are.

But because I think it will be looked for, that I should prove that by the Scriptures, which I have said of the parts of the direction, that so many as may well guide a Christian throughout the day, are as well particularly required every day at our hands to be observed, as generally all our life long: I will therefore satisfy the teachable reader in that which he desireth. And first where I said, that we are guided by the word how to begin the day, and how to go through it; Solomon in one sentence directeth to both: for when he had said, The commandments and instructions should be always bound to our hearts, that is, had in continual remembrance, and tied about our necks, that is, as jewels had in special account: he addeth; that at our awaking, they shall talk with us, and when we walk, they shall lead us. As if he should say, if the word of God be carefully kept in mind, and held in precious estimation, it shall guide us from the morning to the evening, even from our uprising to our lying down: so that, God hath not left the governing of our lives in our own hands, as though he had taken no order for them, but hath appointed in his word how the whole day should be passed.

And further where I said more particularly, that the Christian life, which we are daily to lead, consisteth in a careful declining from all evil, and contrariwise in well living, and bringing forth the fruits of faith and amendment of life: and also in the use of such helps and means, by which this faith and holy life are nourished, and preserved: It is very true: For there are no means necessarily to be

used every day, nor any parts of godly life, which we are bound to perform daily, but the scripture doth particularly require then to be used daily. That which I say of the helps shall be proved afterwards. And for the parts of good life, which we must needs practice daily, they are, that we should be daily occupied in those good works, which in our place and calling, we can see to be required of us: as brotherly kindness, love, sobriety, patience, just dealing towards all, mercifulness, meekness, and such like. And these be like necessary all the days of our life, as in any one; so that it is our sin, when we do the contrary.

Furthermore, the works which must of necessity be done daily, are to carry ourselves both in prosperity, and under all blessings rightly, that is, cheerfully, thankfully, and fruitfully: and in our afflictions patiently and with contentation. And who doth not know, that these both should be daily? For, first that praises and thanksgiving in our prosperity are required to be daily, as long as that estate abideth, consider what the psalmist saith, my tongue shall talk of thy righteousness daily, Psalm. 71:24, and that meant Saint James, Chap. 5:13. In our prosperity to sing praises, and Saint Paul wishing us to give thanks in all things, bringeth us to the same duty every day.

And although the word (daily) be not there mentioned, and where he saith, rejoice in the Lord always, Phil. 4:4, yet who doubteth that he can mean any less than this, when he saith, in all things: even such, as come to pass daily and every day? And yet even this word (daily) is in other Scripture used. For as the mercies of God are renewed daily upon his: so God's people are in the example of the man of God (whose praise is so great in the Scripture) taught, that as they enjoy them every day; so they are every day to sound forth his praise thankfully and cheerfully, as such who feel and acknowledge thereby,

the exceeding sweetness of God's loving kindness and benefits, and that is to make the true and right use of them.

And as daily praises are to be offered for benefits, so must the patient and right bearing of afflictions be daily also, and earnest prayers to God made for the removing of them; as we read the Prophet Daniel did daily, and three times in the day, Dan. 6:10. But about afflictions God requireth these two things of us: the one that we should prepare and make ready ourselves to bear them as from him, in such quiet manner, as that we be not unsettled nor troubled at the heart by them, when we hear of them: the other, that when they come, we show ourselves to be such indeed, and through the encouragement which we have from him, we submit ourselves (even as our neck unto the yoke) willingly to go under them. Now though no wise man doubts, but that God's meaning is that we should be patient and obedient in one as well as another, and one time as well as another; yet that it may plainly be seen, it is to be known, that both these are given us in commandment every day.

For first God hath taught us in the fourth petition (give us this day our daily bread) so to pray for all things needful to this present life, as his most wise providence seeth meetest and best for us; and therefore if he in wisdom do see afflictions fit for us, though we are not to pray for them, we offer ourselves ready to receive them, and take them as a part of our daily bread; or else we understand not what God teacheth us to pray for, nor what we offer to him in making that prayer. For we desire of God in it blessing fit for the time, wherein we are every day: and therefore not only in peace and prosperity, the blessing of thanks, &c. but under affliction, patience, contentation, and such like graces, even the thing of the day in the day, as Agur saith, that is, everything in his time, and as the time

requireth. For in prosperity, the time requireth one blessing; in affliction another: that so we may hang on God every moment.

By this it may be seen, that Christians ought every day to prepare for troubles, and that is a special part of their duty in the day. The other thing about afflictions is, that we bear them willingly when they come every day. And this is that which our Savior Christ teacheth, when he saith, he that will come after me, must deny himself, and take up his cross daily: and this is another part of our duty in the day, so needful to be looked unto, as none more.

So that God hath taught his, that whether their life be incombered with afflictions, or whether it be passed in the use, commodities and benefits, they shall in both estates learn of him how to be directed daily. Yea and to shut up this point, and make it more full: not only every day he hath directed us how to live in both estates, but even through the day also, according to that which is written by Moses in Deuteronomy: The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety under his protection all the day long. When Christ saith watch and pray, least ye fall into temptation, what day, or part of the day, doth he warrant us to be free from danger, without these means, as experience also showeth?

By these things which I have now spoken of, namely, daily to be given to every good work, and to look to ourselves, that both in prosperity and adversity we be daily well ordered; we see that a Christian may be able to govern himself safely through the day, although he had no further direction. But yet more particularly the word of God doth direct them how to pass the day in their calling, in company, alone by themselves, and consequently in all the actions of the day. Which because I have appointed afterward to prove it, and



would avoid tediousness in not repeating it again, I will defer it, till I come to the more particular handling of the daily direction.

But yet the means and helps, whereby a godly life is preserved daily, as I promised before, and least I should not so particularly handle them in the direction following, I will in few words set down: and show, how God hath enjoined so many of them, as do necessarily help to the practice of godliness, daily to be used; and though not the same, yet one or other, as prayer, meditation, exhorting one another, praise and thanks, attending to the public means of the word daily, as oft as we may enjoy it. These means God doth not only enjoin daily to be used, but also in such wise, as he who weigheth how the commanding of them daily to be used, goeth with the commanding of the godly life daily to be continued by the help of them, shall clearly see, that God meant not coldly and ceremoniously to have them performed of us; but that of them both, a true and holy serving of him daily, should be framed: that so we might be one day, as another, and not fickle and changing always, as otherwise we must needs be.

For prayer and praises, in David's example thrice in the day, we are taught to offer them: besides occasions at other times of the day, which a man that looketh well to his ways shall find to be many. Watchfulness, which is a due considering of our ways, and a taking heed to them, is required to be through the day, and all the day long, not on some, more than other. Our exhorting one another, is commanded to be daily, as we shall have occasion, howsoever the practice of it be strange, and out of use with many Christians, who yet are they which ought to use it, if any be; and this when we have opportunity, is to be used to supply the room of other helps which cannot then be well enjoyed. As for reading the book of his law and speaking of the infinite wisdom of God revealed in the same,

howsoever that place of Joshua doth not so precisely and strictly tie them to every day, as other scriptures do to prayer, thanksgiving, &c. (because the day may possibly be passed in the service and worshipping of God aright without that, but not without these: and a good Christian may necessarily be hindered from that, by other duties for a time more necessary) yet who doubteth, that even that was commanded by the Lord to be usual and oft, that is, so far daily used, as when more necessary things in the way do not occupy us? The same I say of public hearing the word of God, as may be gathered by that in the Proverbs, in these words: Blessed is the man that watcheth daily at my gates, and giveth attendance at the posts of my doors. And the like is the saying of Saint Luke of the godly who were in Jerusalem, that they continued daily in the temple, hearing the Apostles doctrine. I go not about to tie any (as I said) to the use of the same particulars every day, which cannot possibly be used every day, but only of those that may: and of the rest, but one or other, that we may be well able to answer for the Christian passing of every day. The sum therefore is this, that God hath commanded, and in his word set down so many parts of a daily direction for a Christian, as by the which he may be guided holily and safely through every day: and therefore that one day as well as another, is to be consecrated unto God, and not left free to ourselves, to pass it, as we think good, and as too many (in a very unprofitable manner) do, and yet such as profess the Gospel.

## **CHAP. 5.**

Of the fourth reason.

Another reason for the persuading of us to look to the daily guiding of ourselves in some certain manner, is, for that he, who will let loose

his heart any day or time of the day to any intemperance, or unlawful liberty, doth fall into some of Satan's snares, and is caught with the deceitfulness of sin immediately, some way or other, if he be not hardened also: yea though he be the best of many, he shall find to his cost how needful the counsel of the Apostle is, watch in all things; and therefore at all times: so that there shall be no time wherein he may cast off fear of evil, that so he may be the man which is spoken of, Blessed is he that feareth always. Yea he shall find that he is more weakened and endangered by one days negligence in little regarding his soul and his actions (whiles other things of less value are carefully looked to) then in an hundred, wherein his care and conscience were continued, besides that, he shall not easily recover himself again. For although God keep his children from many evils, while they desire it: yet if they be secure, he leaveth them to themselves, and doth punish their sins, as he doth other men's. And who would be willing to have his life filled with many fears, disquiets, reproaches, and such other crossings, when he might be free and merry? But besides, nothing is better proved to us then this, that the envious man watcheth all opportunities, yea when men least suspect it, to sow tares with the good seed; to unsettle them, to steal away their heart and love from God, to give it unto creatures. And therefore much more, when we have remitted our care, and left off our watch (whereby he knoweth and seeth, that we are now as an house swept and trimmed up ready to receive such a guest) much more (I say) doth he then take his opportunity to enter and keep possession in us more strongly, and so depriveth us of our former liberties. And even as Samson, when his locks were clipped off, was afraid and troubled at the voice of his wife, saying: The Philistines be upon thee Samson; but yet thought with himself, I will arise and escape their hands, as in times past, but could not: so when the devil hath secretly stolen our hearts from our true treasure, even from attending upon God, and hath fixed them upon some other thing, as pleasure, profit, advancement, or such

like; we thinking to do as in times past, when we had our hearts at commandment, do go about it in vain: For our strength which we had sometime, is gone, and we by seeking liberty amiss, and shaking off the Lord's yoke, do find by experience the fruit of such folly, I may more fitly call it madness. It is not therefore without cause, that we are so earnestly warned by the holy Ghost, that we keep our hearts with all diligence: And again, Let thy heart be in the fear of the Lord continually: which a man would think should be understood by us of one day as well as another, that it be not neglected at any time. For although God will direct and guide us in the way wherein he hath set us, as I have said, yet out of this way (if we will needs wax weary of it) we shall find nothing but awkwardness and crossing of us, wandering and uncomfortableness, because that in no such state hath God promised to govern us. But stir up the gifts of God which are in thee, and that powerful grace, which thou hast received, daily pray to have renewed in thee, by such direction as may be given thee, and thou shalt find thyself to be set forward with such ease, as thou wilt beware that thou forgo it not again.

Moreover, if any would shake off this doctrine, as sifting him more narrowly, then he can well like of: and therefore would for the seeking of more liberty to the flesh, cavil at these Scriptures, as misalleged, such an one must needs maintain, that there is some time, and some days, more liberty given to man, then at other times, and on other days. But he is driven from that hold by manifest Scripture, as he is tied to a daily direction by the former. For to the stopping of such mouths, is that written by the holy Ghost: Take heed that there be not at any time, in any of you an evil heart, and so a departing thereby from the living God: If not at any time, then much less any day, wherein are many times, seeing it is manifest that there are many times, yea hours in the day, wherein the heart may start aside from God, that is, from doing his will: So that nothing

shall be gained by resisting the truth, but it shall turn to the swifter damnation of them, which do it. Men may say (I deny not) that it is hard to have that rule over their hearts: but it will not serve them, to the rejecting of the truth (which God hath brought to light to them and made manifest to their consciences) but that they must for all that, grant, that it is a duty to be yielded unto of them, and therefore to be set upon and gone about rather then resisted, assuring themselves, that an honest endeavor shall not be in vain.

And if we see this in common reason, that a man which hath a long journey to travail, as an hundred or two hundred miles, will not count this sufficient direction, to go on Eastward or Westward, as his way shall lie, or by a general rule only; but will take a particular note by what towns he must go every day, and how he must pass from one to another: what marvel should it be, that they who are to travail this great and long voyage to the kingdom of heaven, yea and that through this large and wearisome wilderness of the world, do not reckon their way generally by the year, but particularly by every day, and through the day consider the diverse kinds of duty, which they are to perform, as a part of the way by which they should go, that at night they may rejoyce, that they are so much nearer their journeys end (and that in safety and quiet) then they were in the morning at their setting forth, and have not (with the greatest part) lost their labor, by going out of their way?

Even as Moses teacheth us, by his own example in the Psalm, where he saith: Teach us, O Lord, to number our days (that is, to consider the shortness of our life by the days of it) that we may apply our hearts to wisdom: that is, in those few days thereof. And as the Steward of some Noble man's house doth not make a general reckoning and account of much money laid out, but writeth the particulars, daily and hourly as he giveth out and receiveth, that he

may not be deceived: so and much more (as the Christian life is more precious than all earthly treasure) doth the wise man look daily to his ways, and through the day, that his account may the less trouble him at his lying down, and consequently at the day of his death. Yea, and more than that, so will he even set down many parts of his life in writing also, such as are principally to be kept in record (as God's benefits, and his own sins) as he is able, and all to help him to be better directed in it.

To the same purpose of daily looking to our ways, our Christian life is compared to a course or race: that as they which run keep their bounds and course, and go not aside out of the way: so should they who run in the Christian race, look before them, and see that they keep in their way, and not run on uncertainly, or wandering they know not where, whither, nor how, by perverting their ways.

It is also compared to an high way, in the which if we guide and keep our beast, although it be laden, it cometh safely to the market with the carriage or burden: but if we suffer it to go out of the plain way into cart-rakes, and to climb up to the brows and rough ways, it is cast and wearied: so if we keep in the known and beaten way, we go on our Christian course safely, although with some difficulty, and with many encumbrances: but if we pervert our way, and go out of it, by and by we fall into danger, we know not how great: as by woeful experience many fearing God have found it with them, who then wished they had been circumspect, when it is too late.

So it is compared to a rule, to guide us: that as well in our talk with other, as alone by ourselves, in our earthly business, as our spiritual service of God: in our affairs abroad, as well as our dealings at home, and in one thing as well as another, we should have certain direction for every part of it. And the very same thing did the faithful servant

of God S. Paul teach Timothy, his beloved and natural son in the faith, by his own example when he said: Thou hast known my course, and manner of living, &c. as if he should say, what hath been my daily carriage of myself (for else he could not have spoken so) and particularly, that it hath been beautified with faith, love, patience in great afflictions and persecutions, with gentleness to all, and long suffering, and bearing much at the hands of unworthy persons: thou hast known also my mind and purpose, what I have desired yet further.

The same is to be said of other faithful servants of God, as Enoch walked with God: Noah was a just and upright man, and walked with God: And Moses was faithful in the house of God. Which speeches uttered of the holy people of God in those times, wherein things were set down more darkly, what can they testify of them less, then this which I say?

So that it is manifest, both by the doctrine of the word of God, and also by the examples thereof, that not only there ought to be a general guiding of God's people by the word, but also a particular trying of their ways thereby, and a framing of them thereto: and that this ought to be as a trade, to be followed in one point as in another, according to the knowledge of everyone, and therefore to be made an ordinary course of them every day, to seek to have direction in all things.

## **CHAP. 6.**

Of the fifth reason, six, seven, and eight.

Furthermore, if a certain direction daily to guide us, doth best keep us well, when we be well, and when we step aside or wander out of

the way by any occasion, if this be fittest to bring us easily to consideration of ourselves, and hold us from going further from God: if (I say) it be the best and fittest estate, thus to order well, and settle our lives, in comparison of any other; then who doubteth, but that it is chiefly to be labored for, and looked after, and holden as most necessary? But that it is so, who can deny? Who will say, but that he which resolveth with himself every morning, to look to his ways all the day following, and to keep a good conscience towards God and men, and for that purpose setteth himself to follow such special and particular rules, as by the which this may be best effected, shall in far better sort perform this (bringing the day to a good end) than they, who though they be in Christ also, yet are not so prepared and well furnished?

I mean such as have only a mind to do well in general, but do not particularly set themselves to observe their ways, but as it falleth out (which is the case of many) much less do they one day as well as another, keep an even course: for they omitting their care any one day, are the easilier brought to the like security many days after. Which men, although I deny not, but in some of their actions, and at some time, do honor God highly, and perform many duties well (and that is for the most part when they have been quickened by the preaching of the word, or their own meditation and prayer, or reading, &c.) yet they being usually carried, by such liberty taking to themselves, far out of the way, do pull down again that, which they had built, and cause their holy profession to be ill spoken of, and the former commendation of them to become ridiculous: and are themselves soon unsettled by every light occasion, dulled by worldly dealings, unquiet by provocations, incensed to revenge by injuries, and much estranged from the life of godliness in many points; whereas some proportion and suitable agreement should be in the whole course of Christians. And yet thus it will be, as I have said



(which is bad enough, if it be well weighed) with such Christians, as do not learn how, and seek with all diligence, to be able to prevent such dangers.

For they being subject to the same infirmities, occasions of offending, and provocations inward and outward, unto the which the best armed people of God are; and yet not so afraid and suspicious of them, not daily making it the chiefest matter to walk well fenced against them (as the others do) which without a daily and continual watch (as far as frailty will permit) cannot be, they must needs find much discontentment in their lives, and discomfort, as also far more looseness and distemperature, then the other do. Besides this, they not accustoming themselves to any certain course of walking with God, nor following any direction to order their ways, they do bring this burden upon themselves, that when they are fallen, they lie long, and hardly rise up again, and make it also an harder matter for them to serve God (as they were wont to do) unless (which is worst of all) they make a light matter of sin, and so return too hastily for mercy to God, before they have well weighed and considered their falls and offenses: And by this, consider on the contrary, what the safety of the other is, who count God's service perfect freedom, and therefore will not be drawn from it at any time; or if they fall, yet lie not still, because they have settled themselves to be well guided daily.

Besides all that hath been said, this appeareth clearly that God looketh for it, that Christians should every day be directed as well as someone day, by the order that he hath set in the ten commandments. For whereas all duty to be performed of us, is either to be showed towards God or men: he to teach us in what sort and manner this is to be done, hath thus set down his will unto us, saying. Concerning myself, for the six days throughout the week, year, your whole life, worship and serve me, both inwardly and

outwardly, as in the three first commandments I have bound you; and on the seventh day, as the fourth commandment enjoineeth. And this is your direction in all duty to me forever. Concerning men, without any respect of any day or particular time, frame yourselves daily and always, as the six last commandments do require. Who doth not see, that the Lord, setting down his mind in the commandments after this manner, hath of purpose set down a perpetual direction for his people throughout their pilgrimage?

For though all see it not, neither consider it, what then? Shall the will of God be of no effect, because of the ignorance of men? But they who see the will and meaning of God aright in them, see no less than this, that I have said. Neither let any object here, that there is no other direction given us, then generally to follow the commandments for our guide, seeing every commandment is to be understood spiritually: and therefore reacheth to all particulars of that kind, yea even those which are inward. For he setteth down more than that, namely, that both on the six days and every of them, one even course of worshipping and serving him be used and aimed at in our particular actions; and on the seventh day, another perpetually to be observed on the sabbath forever, diverse from the former. And because the duties that we owe to men are in the six last commandments indifferently, on all the seven days to be performed: therefore indifferently on the one, as well as on the other (and not at our pleasure when we list, or as we think good) our care to practice and faithfully endeavor after them, is to be continued, and so the contrary sins in like sort are to be renounced. Now in that many of God's people see it not to be thus, nor make any such use of it, it is by reason of their ignorance of God's will in the commandments, and unwillingness to take pain about the same, and unacquaintance with a daily endeavoring and setting themselves to the particular

practicing of duty in every commandment, according to their knowledge, as everyone hath heard the same laid open unto him.

But further, that we should thus be fully resolved every day to live religiously, and that in particular, and not serve God by the gross; it is plainly declared in the Epistle to the Galatians: namely, that we should not esteem one day above another, neither attribute holiness to one, more then to another, and so neglect one in regard of another. And although it may be said, that they in so putting difference in days, did therein show themselves superstitious; but we are not so to be judged of, though we do not as carefully worship and obey God one day as another: I answer, that both in that place and to the Colossians, he rebuking that sin of putting difference in days, doth condemn as well our security, who seek not to glorify God as sincerely and holily, on one day as another; as their superstition who grossly thought one day holier then another. And consequently, look what certain and clear rules the Scripture giveth us, for directing our lives one day, the same must conscionable be applied to every day. And in this respect the sabbath itself, though appointed by God to holy exercises more than other; yet is neither in itself holier than other; nor we to think, that we may be less holy on other days, then on that: but so to look to our hearts and our ways, that although every day cannot be as the Sabbath, through want of the helps, which on that day we may enjoy, and by reason of many hindrances, which fall out on other days rather than on it: yet we should endeavor to walk in the sanctification of our hearts, and innocence of life on the other days, as well as on that.

And to conclude, if our conversation must be in heaven, even whiles we live here on earth: that is, if our whole practice and course, not some part of it, ought to be squared out after the heavenly pattern of the word of God: then who seeth not, that we must be settled after

some godly direction one day as another, to glorify God in our conversation? Neither let any object, that because the several actions of our life are many and infinite, therefore no certain rules can be propounded to be followed of us: for as many as they are, both throughout the day, and the whole year, yea our life; yet may they all be brought under, and fitly referred to a few rules, which will show when we be well governed, and when it is otherwise with us.

And if it were not thus, that we both may and ought to be daily guided by some certain and good direction, and have our hearts also readily disposed, ordinarily and for the most part, throughout the day, unto every good work: then in vain should that be written, which being spoken of David must be practiced of all the faithful: I beheld the Lord always before me (that is, I lived by faith) that I might not be shaken, Act. 2:25. Or if we will say, we need not that constant heed taking, it must needs follow, that our hearts would be ranging out so many ways amiss, that we should be driven to exceeding toil to bring them back again: and yet should not always obtain it neither, though we labored for it earnestly. And so we should make a deadly and endless toil of godliness, and yet be far from the power of it, and fall so oft and so dangerously, that it would breed sore discouragement from seeking to rise up, and recover ourselves again; much less should we persuade other by our example to fear God: and we must of necessity leave undone many duties which ought to be done, and so breed miserable distractions, so that the life of God in us should weakly and little be discerned. Lo, such effects would follow this looseness and liberty-taking, when according to that which we know of God, we should not honor him as God. As I am myself privy to it, that it is the case of many weak brethren, who yet (it is to be hoped) fear God: and yet for that they will oft take liberty which God alloweth them not, (stolen waters being sweet to them) they purchase for an inch of vain pleasure, an

ell of sorrow; and when they would after come back again to an holy course, either they dare not, or know not how to do it, or be ashamed: as the idle scholar is to go to his book again, when (through his negligence) his fellows are got before him. And by this which hath been said, it may easily appear, that the Lord doth require in his word, that such as believe unto salvation, shall renew their care to glorify him in their Christian conversation, and therefore every day to be constant therein, and set themselves earnestly thereto: and if they fall by infirmity, not to lie still, but speedily recover. He will also have them to know that it is a sore blemish in them, to be loose and unstable in a godly life, sometime having their hearts in awe, and sometime not, and so their tongues and lives after the same manner: which service God abhorreth. And therefore we may be sure, that much more the disordered life of many professors, and civil persons whose irreligious lives are covered with some outward exercises of religion, are nothing less than pleasing to God, but utterly abominable. Now seeing all duties cannot be practiced every day, and yet every day must be passed holily: we must of necessity see how to be guided daily; so that neither we neglect those which must be done daily, nor our consciences be not troubled for omitting those, which we are by no necessary bond of God's word tied to perform, Act. 23:1. And of the reasons why the believer should be directed every day to live godly, which are the sum of the first part of this treatise, thus much.

## **CHAP. 7.**

Of the description of the daily direction.

I having now proved, that the word of God setteth out unto us direction for our lives every day: it followeth to show, what this

direction is. And although it may in some sort be gathered by that which hath been spoken already, yet to the end we may more clearly see the will of God, and our duties for the more easy guiding of us through every part of our life, I will further lay forth and describe the same. Yet let none think, that I mean to set down to them particularly what actions they shall do every day, for they are for the most part variable, and innumerable (on the six days especially) and therefore impossible to be enjoined; but only such as bind the conscience every day, and cannot without sin be omitted: and yet such, as are neither too many to be learned to the troubling of the memory; nor so few, but that they yield great furtherance to the true Christian for the well passing of the day. This daily direction then of a Christian, is a gathering together of certain rules out of God's word, by which we may be enabled every day to live according to the will of God, with sound peace: and therefore the following of such direction is a faithful and constant endeavor to please God in all things every day, as long as we live here to the peace of our conscience, and to the glorifying of him. Let this description be opened more plainly, and then I will set down the parts thereof. And before I go further, I think meet to give the Reader to understand, that I set not down this, as prescribing any other direction, then God's word hath taught: but whereas through common ignorance and negligence in observing that which God hath taught, the most do fail, this may be a help to bring them to see the light, after which they ought to walk. It is first called an endeavor to please God, to teach us, that neither full perfection is required by God, nor to be looked for in the best Christians, nor to be thought that it is intended of me to fear any weak conscience with it, or thrust it upon him; but only to show, that the will and desire of the heart, and the endeavor of the life in the believer, is accepted of him through Christ, and as well pleasing to him, as our actions themselves should be, when they cannot be performed. 2. Cor. 8:12.

And if it were not so, what comfort could we have, who see daily, that we are holden back from many duties, which yet because we know we desire with all our hearts, and strive to perform them, we have peace to Godward? And thus are the places to be understood, which make mention of keeping the commandments, that they are blessed which keep them, as Psal. 119:2,8. Luk. 11:28. Blessed are they which hear the word of God and keep the same: as is to be seen by conference of other places, as 1. Chron. 28:7. If Solomon thy son shall endeavor to keep my commandments, I will establish his kingdom forever: And in Hosea, 6:3, then shall we endeavor ourselves to know the Lord. In which places, the keeping of God's commandments is interpreted by the holy Ghost in the Scriptures, to be an endeavoring to know and keep them. And this endeavor is every day necessarily to be found in us to please God, even as ever we did any day, neither can it be neglected of us at any time but God is offended.

For it is a near companion to the fear of God, even a fruit of it, which must be in our hearts continually. Which is to be marked the rather, for that we see how commonly it is neglected many days of Christians, and how they think it mere bondage to be tied to this care of looking to their ways, without which yet, they lie open to all the craft and malice of the devil, being taken of him at his will. And therefore it is, that when the Apostle hath charged the Ephesians to take unto themselves the whole armor of God, he addeth, that they must stand fast in it, and give no place to the devil. So that as we must not be pressed with practice of that which is out of our power, but rest with peace in this, that we endeavor and go about it: neither can there be less offered to God of us then this, but we shall be justly charged to be secure and careless. And this meant the holy Apostle, when he said: I endeavor always to have a good conscience both before God and men.

But we must remember, that this endeavor must be hearty and constant: hearty, and not constrained or hollow, that our beginning may be good as well as our proceeding; and constant, that we faint not, but hold out therein. For many make fair shows, but they are not sound and true from the heart, and therefore soon vanish: other mean well in practicing that which they have been taught, but seeing they do not strongly renew their covenant from day today, and that with as good courage and desire as they began first, and nourish and preserve integrity; they therefore break off and wax faint and weary, before they have brought their work to an end, that is, before death. Whereas we should know, that forasmuch as the devils attempts will ever be great, with new devises and by new occasions in every part of our life, to break off our care: (and yet we can never grow cold in it, but it shall be to our cost, seeing whensoever it shall be so, it will be our great sin) therefore we should go as cheerfully about it, as at the first we began it, (I mean, to continue our care) that so we may prove ourselves to be constant, and not charged (as they in the Psalm 78:34.) to be unfaithful in our covenant.

The third thing in this description is, whereto our endeavor shall tend: even to this, that we may please God in all things; for God will not admit any into his service to do it by halves: neither can we serve two contrary masters. This is Saint Paul's prayer for the Colossians: That they might walk worthy the Lord, even that they might please him in all things, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews: Pray for us: for we trust, that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honestly in all things. Now, who doth not see, that this is a work of great weight, and requireth the taking up our hearts wholly from other hindrances, that we may attend to this? And therefore this much condemneth the backwardness and rebelliousness of such, as look not after this duty: especially we may say so, if we add the other two points in this



description mentioned: as, that this must be daily, and continue to our end.

Both which points are included by the Apostle in this one word (always) when he saith. Act. 24:16. Herein I do exercise myself, that I may have a good conscience both before God and man always: that is, both through all the days of my life, and to the end. And hereto agreeth that of Solomon, Prov. 4:26. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be ordered aright. If all our ways must be ordered aright, then no day can be excepted, but every days actions and ways must be ordered aright. So Paul Act. 26:7, when he would note the constant and continual course of the fathers in a godly life, saith thus: The twelve Tribes instantly served God day and night. And this daily walking with God, is the life which honoreth God, 1. Cor. 10:31, and that only which worketh our joy and peace, 2. Cor. 1:12, as the last part of the description of the daily direction declareth.

By this which hath been said though it may in some sort be gathered, and that of the most of God's children, how the day ought to be passed of them; yet for the simpler sort, whom I do chiefly respect and regard through this my whole labor, for their sakes I say, I will add unto this direction somewhat more particularly a brief sum of such rules, as of necessity must guide us, and which do bind the conscience to a daily practice of them, which I may call the necessary parts of it, and they (among others) are these:

## **CHAP. 8.**

Of the necessary parts of the daily direction, being the second branch of the second part of this Treatise.

First, that every day we should be humbled for our sins, as through due examination of our lives by the law of God we shall see them.

2. Every day we be raised up in assured hope of the forgiveness of them by the promises of God in Christ.

3. Every day we prepare our hearts to seek the Lord still, and keep them fit and willing thereto.

4. Every day we strongly, and resolutely arm ourselves against all evil and sin, fearing most of all to offend God.

5. Every day we nourish our fear and love of him, and joy in him more than in anything, and endeavor to please him in all duties as occasion shall be offered, looking for his coming. 2. Thes. 3:5.

6. Every day our thanks be continued for benefits received, and still certainly hoped for.

7. Every day we watch and pray for steadfastness and constancy in all these.

8. Every day we hold and keep our peace with God, and so lie down with it.

And this is the direction which every Christian must practice every day in his life, and these are the necessary parts of it, which may not be omitted any day at all without sin: nor carelessly and wittingly without great sin. To the which, if it should be said, that they are dark and hard to be understood, much more to be put in practice; yea and although they could, yet do they not sufficiently nor thoroughly guide a Christian: I answer, he that understandeth so much in the Scriptures, as that he knoweth thereby himself reconciled to God, and so have sure hope to be saved, and to be one

of them, whom God hath chosen out of the world from the rest which shall perish; he can easily understand the meaning of this direction, and the points and parts thereof, and is fit to be directed by it, (as for any other, it is but to accuse and convict him of infinite iniquities in his life, and of guiltiness of eternal damnation thereby) although through the law of his members, which rebel against the law of his mind, and through ignorance, and the malice and subtlety of the devil, he be much distracted on the other side, and hindered from that which he seeth he ought to do, until experience have made him better acquainted with it.

But this is the battle, which he must feel and have with his lusts, and which every true believer must be exercised with daily: and yet this resistance and rebellion against God's grace, which he feeleth by this corruption and sin daily, is a most fit whetstone to sharpen him the more to embrace and follow these rules in this direction set down, because he shall see, that by them he is made strong against these his rebellions daily by little and little, whereas without some such direction, he could in no wise be able to resist.

Now whereas it is objected, that although it should be practiced, yet it is not a sufficient directing of him, for, and throughout the day; seeing every rule and point hath not his certain time set down, in which it should serve, and in the which it should be required: to this I say, that we must not imagine, that there is any such direction, as though thereby we might keep from sin any hour of the day: but this direction teacheth, how by the wisdom of God's spirit according to the measure of our knowledge, we may be led through every part of the day in peace and safety, and do all the outward actions of the day, as by occasion we shall be called thereto, more purely, and dutifully, and with more ease and cheerfulness, then otherwise might be looked for; especially after we have by longer experience been

exercised therein: for God doth teach his children wisdom: when, and how to use thanks, and when to make requests, what sin to oppose themselves against, as their weakness shall require, what duties to follow, how to watch over their heart, and life; and by all, to find and obtain rest to their souls.

And although through infirmity, which is in the best, they shall never fully reap the fruit, which the rules do lead unto, for they fail through over-sight, rashness, and by other natural corruption are much feebled, and therefore must needs come short in performing duty, as they ought: yet through the grace that God giveth his, they find and still may obtain by the help hereof, such ease in the serving of God through the day, as they thought before impossible, and never looked to enjoy, that they may truly say, notwithstanding the sin that cleaveth to them, that they have oft most sweet communion with God, and hold their sin in great subjection to their admiration, which was wont full sore to embondage them. Neither shall this seem strange or doubtful which I say, if it be well considered.

For hath not the Lord promised to make his children partakers of the divine nature, even the grace of his holy spirit, whereby they shall fly the corruption that is in the world through lust? Hath he not said, that if they watch and pray, they shall not fall into temptation? But be delivered from evil? And that if they resist the devil, he shall fly from them? And by the armor of a Christian they shall stand fast against all infernal subtlety? And hath he not said, that the weapons of our warfare are mighty, casting down strong holds, which seemed impossible to be cast down? Hath he not taught us that he is greater which is in us, then he that is in the world? Hath he not promised them his spirit the comforter, which the world cannot have, that they might not be here as Orphans and desolate? And that he will lay no more upon his, then he will make them able to bear?

And what should I say more? Hath he not given them singular prerogatives, that they being upholden by them, may pass by the deceivable baits of the world, that they may not poison them? And by this little which I say, of a great deal which might be said out of the Scriptures to the like purpose, doth not God hearten and encourage his to trust in him for that strength and grace which shall be sufficient for them? And hath he not taught them daily to think much of these things? Now then, when his poor servants come to know his mind, and will in them, and how he is affected to them: yea which is more, when they shall be further instructed, that his will is, that they should daily occupy their minds in thinking of these and such like things, is it any great marvel if they grow more heavenly minded, and be more constantly settled in an holy course? And so become acquainted with the practice of duty more usually and continually then they were wont, when either they know not that any such thing was required of them daily, or how to bring their hearts daily to like of it?

And when they shall be well and thoroughly persuaded (whatsoever the wandering and inconstant course of the most be) that God requireth of them, that every day they shall warily shun evil, wait to honor him in the proper duties and service, which they owe to him, and count it their chief work to do so daily: to pray oft, and to speak to him in thanksgiving, daily renew their faith, and hope of salvation, and other temporal favors of his; when, I say, they shall see that God cometh thus near to them, whiles they are absent from him here on earth, and offereth them this familiarity as his friends, and not using them as servants, is it to be marveled at, that they accept of it daily? And when they have tasted once, that this may be their usual and ordinary diet (this sweet communion with God, I mean, which was wont to be but their feasting now and then) is it to be thought strange, that they should reach out their hand to this their welfare?

No, no: if God once persuade his, that they may walk in his favor every day, and with more acceptation and better welcome, then when they could have but a small glimpse of it, once in a week, month or quarter, they will not starve when they may banquet, they will not eat acorns with swine when they may be fed with Angels food, they will not joy in the company of wicked men, when they may have communion with the God of glory, and with his dear servants departed out of this life by the good memorial which they have left behind them: and with those which remain here still; being such, as in whom the Prophet had all his delight. Neither will they want or any day forgo the liberties of the children of God, namely confidence, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost; to solace themselves in earthly things (which bring great bondage) with the sons of men.

Indeed I deny not, but whiles God's people are tied short of the clear knowing their liberties, and are holden in blindness and ignorance of these things, as many are, but that they are also kept in unbelief, not being persuaded, that God affordeth such liberties to them: and then moreover, the penury of good examples to go before them herein, do much hinder and hold them back from enjoining their part in them. But who doubts if they knew these things, and were persuaded of them, but that they would be as joyful to hear of this heavenly and happy news, as they were to have the tidings of salvation at their first calling, as being now better able to discern the beauty of heavenly things then when they first believed?

These and such like, which God doth admit his dear children unto, should be taught them oft, and plainly, and wisely, and fitly applied to them. Ministers should dwell in them: and know by themselves, who have in a long time grown but in small inward acquaintance with them, that the people do not in two or three teachings of them, no nor so many years teaching, reach to the clear understanding,

much less the use and fruit of them: not only because they require practice, but daily and continual practice: and that of them, they were wont to have their hearts and their heads taken up and possessed of worldly cares, and worldly lusts, which with no small, but much labor and love of the Minister in teaching, as well as the people's liking, reverence and diligence in hearing and praying, must be beat out again.

And yet (which is most pitiful to think) through this, that few are by diligent and sincere preaching brought to Christ at all by true conversion, it cometh to pass, that there are very few, for the most part, in one congregation who are fit to hear or be taught this doctrine. And those that are, do seldom meet with it: and therefore they seeing how hard it is to get necessary helps for this life, and that care to be in greatest request among men in the world, even they also grow sick of the same disease, and while the chief thought is how to live, and their help small to live daily to God, they have lean souls, and now and then, only are in a well ordered course, and that with much ado, so far is it off, that they have any daily taste of heaven in this life.

Which, how common soever it be to be found almost in every place where God hath any Church, yet we must not think, that it can be no otherwise: as though common Christians were not able to reach and attain to any daily serving of God joyfully, if diligence were used in beating things into them oft: (for both we may find here and there some few, who do happily enjoy that care and liberty daily: and also many more and long for it at first, when they have but a dim sight and small taste of it) but they are not trained to it, nor furthered in it, to whom otherwise it should be most welcome. And though men think that Christians have other things to look after, then the worshipping and serving of God: yet I say, in good advisedness, that

if they could obtain this, to give God his due daily with all good conscience, even this were the nearest way for them, to come by all things which they have need of in this world, as our Savior saith: First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And therefore I have written this treatise particularly of the daily directing of the people of God, who have already consecrated and given over themselves unto his service, that it may put them in mind, that this their covenant with God is to be renewed daily, and their best care to please him, that ever they had, even their first love, to be still continued, and that they must daily abide in his love. And in a word, the rules which I have before set down for the keeping of the heart in good plight and order, one day as well as another, and so consequently the life; must from day today be above all other things looked to and regarded: whereas otherwise there are things innumerable, as trains and snares laid by the devil, to deceive, distract, and unsettle them, and so they shall find it a hard and wearisome work to return again. And if any see ought in this which I say, fit to benefit him, let him be careful to help on others.

But I will return to that from which by occasion I digressed: that is to say, that we should inure and acquaint ourselves with these rules which are before set down for the well seasoning and ordering of our hearts, that thereby we may be fit to govern our lives every day, and that by the help of them both, we may be fenced from great dangers, and walk with God all the days of the life of our pilgrimage: and this is that living by faith, which the Scripture maketh mention of, when it saith: The just shall live by his faith. And which is said to have been the life of our fathers (who yet were much more darkly led and guided then we) as is to be seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is said of Abel, Noah, Abraham, and many other: All these died in faith, in the which they had lived and continued unto their end. And Paul spake it of himself, who was an example to all God's people: I



live no longer, but Christ in me, and the life that I lead is by faith in the Son of God. This form of direction, that we ought to be guided by every day, or any other agreeable to the Scriptures, is both by good reason, and the testimony thereof proved unto us to be that which we must follow, that so we may live by faith (as I have said.) For (to say a little for the instruction of the simple) seeing every day is one part of our whole life, wherein we are by great likelihood in danger to offend and provoke God, yea even then when we have the fewest stops in our way to hinder us, and most helps to further us, it standeth with most sound reason according to the word of God, that we be fenced and prepared to pass one day as well as another, if we make account well to pass and go through our whole course. And therefore to see how this form of daily direction, is drawn out of the word of God, let every part of the whole prove, and testify unto us.

## **CHAP. 9.**

Of the illustration or more full declaration of the former part of the direction.

For the first point, that we must be displeased with our selves, and humbled for our sins every day, as ignorance, deadness of heart, rashness, uncharitableness and wrath, or any other, that shall give us occasion: yea, even the body of sin itself, that verse of the Psal. 51:3, doth prove: where David seeking pardon of his sin, acknowledged it to God, saying: I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me; then no day to be forgotten. So the Apostle saith, the sun must not go down upon our wrath, meaning thereby, that we must soon forget and forgive, and compound our controversies, and break off our strife; and not lie therein till the evening: therefore daily confess, and be humbled for then, which cannot be done (we know) to the

pleasing of God, except our hearts be broken with relenting and melting for them. And if the sun may not go down upon our wrath, neither (by the like reason) any other sin may be suffered to lurk or abide any such time in us, who doth not see, that it should be a good part of our care throughout the day, both to cast out such draff, (as we have drunk in) by lamenting our estate, even as it ought to be another part of it, to hold and keep it out? And if Job when his sons and daughters did feast together for the preserving of love every day in their course; if he (I say) did command them to sanctify and cleanse themselves every day, and did in like manner, offer burnt offerings for them himself every morning, because he thought they had some way displeased God, would he (think we) on other days, when they were like more to offend, count it a needless matter for himself or them to do the like? Which clearly teacheth us, that we should purge and cleanse our hearts from all such sin, as might infect them, even every day: we should do this (I say) as well as upon any one, seeing there is cause and need every day, and when we go through the day in the best manner that it may be passed, new guilt by sin ariseth against us: that if David for his great and grievous sins, did every day wash his bed, and water his couch with tears, for a space (as he testifieth:) can we think but that he kept some proportion on the other days (although he had not ever the same particular cause) in lamenting, bewailing, and acknowledging his sins? Especially seeing we read of him, that three times in a day his usual manner and custom was to praise and pray unto God. And if the wicked are said not to be up and ready any day, as the Prophet speaketh, until they have wrought some mischief, (so natural and ordinary a matter it is with them:) should any doubt, but that we should hold it for one piece of our chief work, daily to cast down ourselves before the Lord, and to humble ourselves, in the hearty confessing of our sins? And it was one of the principal things that God meant to teach us, by the morning and evening sacrifice, and

prayer daily in the law of ceremonies. But I would all good Christians did as duly and conscionably perform this duty to God every day, and bind themselves resolutely thereto, as the word of God doth clearly prove that they ought to do so: as for them who may please themselves in outward humbling of the body, and confession of the mouth; in a word, they must know, that the chief glory of it is inward.

The second point followeth, namely, that every day we ought to be raised unto a cheerful and lively believing, that our sins thus bewailed, confessed and repented of, are forgiven, and freely remitted unto us, for and through the only and sufficient satisfaction of Jesus Christ. And for the proof of this, it is sufficient, that these two are never parted, but go together, as Peter saith: Repent, and ye shall receive the forgiveness of your sins: and in Hosea the people were thus taught to seek and come by it: Return unto the Lord from your iniquities, and then say to the Lord, Take away all our iniquity, and receive us graciously: and he will hear your rebellion, and love you freely, for his anger is turned away from you. And our Savior commanded his Apostles to abide in his love, even as they had tasted how sweet it was. Now then, if every day we ought to turn from our sins, we ought also every day to embrace the promise of mercy. Besides, in that the Church of God is taught this for an article of her faith, to believe her sins to be forgiven; and the articles are firmly and constantly to be holden and believed, and all unbelief is sin at any time: therefore as we are to be raised up by faith in Christ's merits, that our sins are pardoned now, even so we are at other times, and one day as well as another to be so upholden.

Again, as in our common prayer which is called the Lord's; which serveth forever to square out our prayers by, and therefore for every day, the word (this day) is expressed, serving for every day of our life; that we may know, that there is no day of our life, wherein this

prayer in effect is not to be made; no day wherein we pray not for our daily bread, even all necessaries for this present life: so is there no day in which we ask not, and so in which we ought not to enjoy it by faith, I mean, the forgiveness of our sins. And if every morning God's mercies be renewed, of which this is chief; then we also must in the same manner embrace them by faith as our own, and so partake them. So that this bindeth the conscience also as the former, that every day the true Christian must be persuaded of the pardon of his sins, and that no day he should loose his part in so great a treasure, though it is to be feared, that many good Christians enjoy it not. Neither indeed can this second rule be faithfully observed and kept, but it will cause all the other to be well looked too and regarded. Bring we therefore our hearts daily to count it our treasure, that so they may delight in it: (for where our treasure is, there will they be also) and then we have well and wisely provided for ourselves in that day, and our greatest toil is over (as they say) for the whole day following. And this will be done, if, as it is the greatest of all other: so we resolve, that none is greater with us. To speak more largely of these pointes here, is not my purpose, for that they have been handled before in the first and third treatise: only thus much, to refer this believing of pardon to every day. And this is here to be looked for of the reader, that every one of the points and partes of this daily direction (the which I have taught in other parts of this book, how they should be attained and come by) must be kept of a Christian every day.

The third point is, that when we shall be strongly haled after sin, (for we must know that every day gives occasion thereof) that we so account of the liberty of our hearts and minds, to keep them well-disposed and armed against all sin, and most of all, our special infirmities, that we let them not loose at any time in the day, to be hardened with the deceitfulness of any sin, but kept with all diligence

possible, from the love and liking thereof, that so our outward actions may be well ordered. Therefore is that charge given in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that our hearts be not made naught, and rebellious at any time, and therefore by consequent on any day, whiles we suffer them to be hardened with the deceitfulness of sin. And agreeable to this, the Lord in Deuteronomy, answering Moses (when he brought him word, that the people would willingly be ruled by him, although before they refused so to be) said: This people hath said well all that they have said: but oh that there were an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always; then it should go well with them.

So that we must see such necessity of holding mastery over our hearts, and keeping them in fear of offending, that we may make a daily practice of it, and so keep them for continuance: neither can we otherwise show ourselves to regard that weighty charge of the Lord given unto us: Thou shalt worship the Lord with all thy heart and soul. For they who are every while off and on, unsettled in their hearts, can never be long well-ordered in their lives: therefore the Lord requireth this constancy, that we must every while be looking to them, even always, that so we may be out of danger. Behold how needful a thing this is, to keep and hold this mastery over our hearts daily: when nothing goeth well forward, where they with the affections of them be not well ruled. But this shall be showed in the next section following. Neither let men object their necessary business (though they will not plead for carnal liberty, they say) and multitudes thereof, which will distract their hearts. I answer, of multiplicity of earthly dealings, which will hinder holy peace, let wise Christians beware: and so doing, if (as far as they are able) they set themselves to have care of all parts of Christian obedience, their hearts shall in good manner provide thereby, for the well ordering of

their earthly business also, which is one part of it, and none of the meanest.

Now from this heart well governed, the next two points (as two arms of a tree, from the body or stock) do issue and come: The first, that we should ever keep from evil: which shall not be hard, if always and every day we be held in fear of offending, as we are directed before. The second, that we always endeavor to please God, and therefore in all things; and as was said in Deuteronomy, to keep all his commandments: which all may see, cannot be if we have not our hearts so prepared to seek the Lord, that we may be ready in one duty as well as in another, to show ourselves obedient. All which three, namely, 1. to have a heart to fear God, 2. to fly evil, 3. and please him in all things, in that one Scripture before mentioned are required daily to be found in us; so there is no man but may easily see reason, why it should be thus: first, seeing the one cannot be without the other: secondly, the keeping of such agreeableness betwixt our hearts and lives is our beauty and honor. And on the contrary, it is most harsh and offensive, when they which bear a fair show, and are content sometimes to be governed, shall yet at other times be nothing so.

I will say somewhat the more of these two, seeing it is one of the chiefest causes, why I entered into this present treatise, as may appear by that which I have already said: namely, that the Christian should be every day free from all reproachful evil: insomuch as if by any occasion he be turned out of the way, yet he should speedily return, and also that he should be daily given unto every good work, watching his opportunity thereto, that so he may have a good conscience in all things, and may bring forth much fruit, that God may be glorified. Yet I mean not that he should spend the whole day in reading, prayer, hearing of Sermons, or other religious exercises

(excepting the Sabbath) but in one lawful thing or other about his calling; or any other instead thereof, which may be as well defended, and as pleasing to God as the duties of his calling.

More particularly to appoint or prescribe is hard, and this is plain enough for every true believer to understand, and apply unto himself: for I exclude not the commonest and meanest services and works, so as they be such as God alloweth, and without vicious affections gone about of him: as in the man, plough and cart, sowing and reaping, and all work thereto belonging, if he be called thereto; or other work in the man of occupation, as he hath been trained up and fitted for: as also all provision of things necessary to the maintenance of his family by lawful skill and honest means; and paying, and receiving of that which is due.

In the woman, to have care, that all be frugally and thriftily done within the house and without, which is under her hand; that she be diligent to see her children Christianly brought up according to their age, her household to have all that is meet in due season: and more particularly among the rest, spinning, sowing, knitting, being done as to the Lord, and being those works which he appointeth them, and such like, are commendable, that they may be neither idle nor unprofitable. And these I name in some particular manner, lest any should think, that I go about any new-found out holiness to tie Christians unto, as some will be ready enough to imagine and think, when they shall see and understand that they must every day be well occupied, (which few will be tied to) and doing of one good duty or other.

And yet this I add, that as these and such like must be done, and in one or other of them the six days must be bestowed, yet (I say) this must be added, that all these lawful works must be done of them in

faith, that is, they must know that God commandeth such works to be done of them, and therefore they do them readily and willingly, not for necessity only, or for fear of punishment, or shame of the world, or because they would be rich: all which are carnal, sensual and devilish respects, as I said before in forbidding all vicious affections in men's lawful actions; neither do they please God which thus go to work. And further they must do these lawful works in persuasion and confidence that God will bless them therein, and give them good success, and take that for their daily bread and blessing, which God in their thus-going to work, doth bestow upon them.

And lastly, they must do these without adding the common sins, which wicked persons do use at their work, as swearing, lying, negligence, idleness, falsehood and deceiving, cursing, quarrelling, impatience, and contention. These and such other of their own devising the wicked do bring in, among the lawful works which God commandeth them to do, and mixeth such evils with the doing of the works, which of themselves are good, that they utterly mar, and deface them thereby, deprive themselves of God's blessing, and it causeth their callings and trades to be meanly accounted of, and in discredit with such as are not able to judge, as though none could use them better: whereas others as poor as they, and as much put to their shifts, yet taking better direction, and depending on God, and carefully abstaining from such sins, as are wont in the most to accompany their lawful works and dealings, do live in them contentedly, peaceably, and holily, and do in that manner put honor and beauty upon their callings, and testify that God hath to singular ends and purposes appointed and given them unto us.

And thus would God have Christians go to their work, and do all their lawful business, not as hirelings, only in regard of their bellies. And this were a goodly and most beautiful sight to behold in all sorts,



masters, servants, buyers, sellers, and even in the poor laborers; yea, cutters of wood, and drawers of water: and they that are of meanest place in families may live godly in them while religion rules their actions, and while they desire to do them as they are taught in the word of God. And they who go to work after this manner, may be merry at their work, and merry at their meat: and yet I mean not as the profane and earth-worms, who sometime are merry when they have more cause to be heavy, seeing neither they nor their work are pleasing to him; but the other may rejoice and be glad by God's allowing, yea commanding it them, where he saith: Rejoice thou and thine, before the Lord thy God, in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. And again: Serve the Lord thy God (that is, in that thou art appointed by him to do) in joyfulness and with a good heart for the abundance of all things. And this is the mirth and joy of heart, which the Apostle willeth us to take our part in, saying: Speak to yourselves in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual songs; singing, and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, with thanks for all things through Jesus Christ. In this sort hath God allowed his servants, who have learned and are resolved to obey him in all things, to rejoice, and go about their worldly affairs; and in like manner, doth he allow them to use all their lawful liberties in this life: all which, he knoweth they have need of, to allay the tartness, and assuage the painfulness and grief which through their afflictions are infinite ways ready in all places to meet with them. And not to do lawful business and works thus, and with the three former rules set down, but as the unruly and disordered people of the world do them, is to make the lawfulest and excellentest callings base and mean, and to the persons themselves most hurtful while they stand forth against them as accusations, for that they have used them unlawfully, which in themselves are very honest and lawful: which I say, that I may answer the brutish and irreligious sort, who say they know no difference betwixt those who are counted godly, and themselves; seeing they are fain (say they) to

work for their living, as well as we, their godliness will not feed them. The difference let them learn from that which I have said.

I have also spoken this by occasion, for the satisfying of the simple-hearted, that they may not think that (in requiring that we should live every day in a godly manner) I do urge any to leave off, and lay aside their callings and business: and yet this I show to be required by the Lord; how, and in what manner those lawful works ought to be done of them, that he therein may be pleased. And so I conclude, that the believer ought every day to arm and frame himself to a godly life, and to cast off all that savoureth not thereof (as in some which are most usual actions I have showed) seeing his whole conversation must beseem the Gospel; remembering what the wise man saith: All that thine hand shall find to do, do it with all thy power, for there is no work in the grave whither thou goest.

Which if it were persuaded thoroughly to men, that it ought to be so, and that it is as necessarily to be looked after, as their maintenance, health; yea, or their life itself (which none well advised will deny:) then should there not be this posting it off from one to another, which now there is: nor this refusing to be subject to God in this main and great commandment of doing all to his glory, which they that refuse, do refuse godliness itself: And there should not be this parting of stakes betwixt God and ourselves, that sometime we will be forward, and sometime backward, in some things obedient, but in others denying our obedience, which causeth such patching and piecing of duties, as is far from holiness, without which yet, we shall never see the Lord's face; whereas yet by constancy in duty, and keeping of a daily course, therein much dullness, deadness, barrenness, sloth, idleness, and the fruits thereof, lewd lusts, and many such dangerous evils should be avoided, with which even many

good Christians (to their great heart-smart afterwards) are annoyed, because they know not how to do better.

The sixth point of our daily direction in thankfulness: I mean, a renewing of this duty to the Lord every day, that so we may still see and acknowledge ourselves indebted unto him, and be the fitter to go under any of his fatherly chastisements, which he shall lay upon us, which without it, will press us down, and raise bitterness in our hearts: and also that by it, we may the offer call to mind God's many kindnesses, to cheer our hearts, which are too soon forgotten of us. The Prophet Jeremiah forceth this daily duty to be continued of us, when he saith, that the mercies of God are renewed upon us daily: and what followeth upon that, but this, that our hearts should conceive, and our mouths should set forth and declare his praise accordingly? For if we be commanded as the Psalmist teacheth, to continue this duty long after his benefits be received (as he saith, Let Israel now say, that the Lord is gracious, after his bountifulness had been declared unto them) how much more ought we to praise the Lord daily for his mercies renewed upon us?

Therefore, did David the faithful servant of God force himself to perform this duty as too slothful in his own judgment, though we read of none more continually occupied in it, Psalm 103:3, saying: Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within thee, praise his holy name: and further he saith, that he will be ever setting forth his goodness, and praise his name always.

And yet that none may hinder this duty in us by saying, we are not bound to follow, no not good examples in all things, let us well weigh the commandment of God by the Apostle, saying: In all things be thankful: as if he should say, that our whole life ought to be a thanksgiving; and therefore it is no life, when we cannot be thankful.

And what the thankfulness is which should daily be in us, look in the former treatise.

The next duty to be daily performed of us, is watchfulness and prayer: of which two, as the first ought to be continual, even to oversee our whole work in and through the day, and to look before us that all may be done to the glory of God (for as the eye-lids preserve the tender eyes from annoyance, so doth this our life from offense, and our feet from falling:) so this latter, namely prayer, is to be as an help and hand-maid unto that.

And although I prescribe no certain rule, nor set hour to the solemn performing of this duty, because we are taught to pray always, at any time as we shall have fit opportunity, yet ought our hearts to be lifted up to God often, having ever occasion: and sometime solemnly, and by set prayer pouring out our complaints, and making our requests unto him. Both of them are so far to be in use with us, as we are desirous to retain sound peace and quiet minds toward God, and to be free from, or at least, not to be overcome of temptations: which seeing we are subject unto every day, it cannot be doubted of, but as the one should not cease, I mean watchfulness, but be working in us continually, and keep us waking out of spiritual slumber throughout the day; so the other which is prayer, should quicken and sharpen it, and both of them strengthen us, being oft and usual with us, against all occasions, which might else over-match us.

And can any be ignorant, when our Savior taught us to pray every day for our daily bread, but that we should pray every day for grace to be guided aright and comforted, there being as great need of it, and more, then of the other? The same thing he meant, when he uttered a parable to them to this end, that they ought to pray always, and not to wax faint: but ever willing, though not ever able. So that

the life of a Christian is no day well passed, when prayer (as it hath been before described) is not one member and part of it.

The last point of our direction is, that we by means of all these, as our faith, and fear of displeasing God, &c. may keep and hold fast our holy and most sweet peace with God, and our rejoicing, which is the fruit of this Christian walking, and an inseparable companion unto the same. I have taught this in general before: only now I show, that it is daily to be kept and maintained of us, in such wise, that as we regard our bodily maintenance while we live here, so should we provide that this our peace, which passeth understanding, be not broken off betwixt God and us. If it be asked how this shall be; the Apostle saith, If we be justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we have and do enjoy it. And we have heard, that the Lord hath both given liberty, yea and commandment to his children, that they should daily believe and lay hold on eternal life, and rest themselves in the assurance of his love: and how can this exclude that peace which we speak of?

Nay, our rejoicing in the Lord, which is rather a degree beyond this peace, we are commanded to entertain and retain always, that is, at all times, that none may imagine that I mean, we should only someone time in the day or other possess and enjoy it. Neither indeed is any part of our life any day pleasant unto us without it. Therefore the Apostle doth very fitly meet with an objection of ours in the forenamed Scripture, thus: that if any of us dare not presume so far as to take our part in continual rejoicing in the Lord, or if we should think, that the Apostle was not well advised in offering so great liberty unto us, he repeateth his words thus (again, I say, rejoice:) as if he should say, you who are careful over yourselves, and over others, (for to such he speaketh) be ye merry and joyful in the

Lord from time to time, yea and so as no worldly sorrows do break it off.

Now I have showed what are the necessary graces which should accompany the life of the believer daily, I wish him to view then all at one sight together; to see if he may well be without any of them: as without certainty of the forgiveness of his sins, without fear of offending God, a thankful heart, and cheerful watching and praying against evil, &c. And he cannot walk void of any of them, so yet: he must not think but that there are other particular actions beside these, but they be all to be well ordered and governed by these. And now somewhat I will set down about them, not unprofitable and needless. I have briefly proved, that some certain manner of directing a Christian daily, is required in the word of God, and that it is no fancy of man's brain, thus nearly and narrowly to look to himself: and have set down a draught thereof out of the Scripture, and therefore men must know, that it is their sin, when they are not guided by these rules in the daily course of their living: I say, when these accompany them not, whatsoever their calling is, or the actions which they are occupied about, it is their sin, whether it be of ignorance, that they know them not (which is the less, if they be willing to learn:) or carelessness, or willfulness, that they do not, or will not, regard them; and being sin, it is to be resisted, seeing no sin is to be borne withal, or rested in.

And that it may be thought more necessary to be daily guided in this manner, we must know, that these graces which I have spoken of, are not at someone time or other of the day to be thought or spoken of (think not this to be my meaning, in saying we must have them every day) for so, we might possibly be little the better for them (as if once in a day a man should pray, give thanks, look to his ways, to his peace, &c.) a man might do all these and the like, and yet not of

necessity well guided for all that, through the day: but this I mean, that this holy furniture should clothe and beautify our souls throughout the day, and have their settled abode in us; and not ebb and flow as the tide doth, nor go and come as passengers that tarry not; but home-dwellers: as for example, that our peace should not be broken off by any occasion, our watching should not cease, we should keep ourselves from evil the whole day, and so likewise be ready to one duty or other, and we should cherish our weak faith from time to time, retaining minds thankful, and walking in the strength of our prayers, though we be not ever uttering and expressing in words either prayers or thanks.

So that our hearts may be well seasoned with these, as the chief things, which we should regard and look after, and yet neglecting no needful work that must be done, but doing it much the better by means of these; and so the froth of our own brains, as endless and needless wanderings, vain cogitations, and foolish and noisome desires, shall be much restrained and allayed in us. This is it (all wise men do know) that most troubleth us, and of the which, we be every day in greatest danger; I mean, the looseness and disorderdness of our hearts: for they, as they be never unoccupied, but prone to evil a thousand ways; so if they be not bridled, holden under, and suppressed, they are so soon fixed upon some object that cometh in the way, that they carry us headlong after it, we being then impotent for the time and unable to resist, when we have let them loose, and given them scope.

And from thence arise (I speak of the better sort of us) great heaviness and unquietness, to see such changes wrought in us: and this is the best that cometh thereof, until we recover ourselves again, if a worse thing follow not, that we fall not into some further unsettledness and distemperature, which will cause no small

annoyance. Now what is a like remedy against this, and all other baits of this deceitful world, which the devil layeth in our way, as to have our hearts daily fenced thus with watch and ward against them, as I have said, to hold such sin execrable always, to keep in love with piety and goodness, to retain hope and confidence that God will make us strong against them, to live in his favor still that we may want nothing that is good, and to enjoy most sweet and sound peace to comfort us so to our liking, that we may not need to hast greatly or gape after such allurements, which are no better than deadly poison? What (I say) is like this precious remedy, to keep us in safety every day? Which God hath therefore given us, that we may be preserved from infinite fearful dangers, which are in this world, and that we may also live with much comfort; yea, he that giveth his heart to the Lord, that it may be taught all these rules of the daily directing of a Christian, can tell how true this is, and what reward is found and enjoyed daily of such as take delight in them.

But many Christians, who bear a good affection to the Gospel, and generally mean well, yet will not particularly trouble themselves (as they count it) to be brought in their whole course within a narrower compass, and to a more near acquaintance with the Lord, yea when they hear that it is to become by, but would fain bear themselves in hand, that they are well enough; when yet they are oft constrained to fear, yea and to feel the contrary: for what do they find but much weariness and grief, checks and accusations, yea and are sometime also noted of others, to be but cold and barren professors, when they have followed so much and so far the devises and desires of their own hearts? And besides this, how much detract they from the beauty and excellency of the godly life, and what injury offer they unto it, when they are able no further to commend it then as they find, (for as they find, so they will speak of it) whereas it cannot sufficiently be esteemed and accounted of: neither can the servants



of God, who have experience of the benefit of it, satisfy themselves in setting out the excellency thereof.

I deny not, but there are many, who for want of knowledge, do not see that which sundry others of their brethren do, and yet are faithful in that which they know: but they rest not satisfied with their present estate, but long much to see the will of God more clearly, and desire fervently to attain to greater measure of grace. And to all such I know, how welcome it will be to have more clear direction, then as yet they have found: and such I would have know, that for their causes I was persuaded to utter that, which God hath revealed to me so far as concerneth them. But as for such as like so of their present estate, that they hast not to be acquainted with any better, (seeing there is ever in God's children a desire to grow, and a longing to be better) whatsoever they think of it, and how highly soever they account of themselves in it, they shall go forward everyone his way, till they be as blind as the moule, as deaf as the adder, as dumb as he that openeth not his mouth, and as unprofitable as the salt that hath lost the savor, and is good for nothing but to be trodden under foot, and cast upon the dunghill.

Neither let the people of God count this any burden to be thus directed: but it is their flesh and corrupt wisdom which burdeneth them, whereto they are not debtors. And what do I persuade unto, but the use of, and continuance in that holy condition, which every true believer hath tasted of, and had his part in, but that many such through ignorance and unacquaintedness with it, have not attained unto steadfast continuance in it? But to return a little to the other: ô people to be lamented and ever pitied, that they being borne to great honor even here in this life, should forgo it so contentedly, and suffer others to enjoy it: whom I require to hear me, saying unto them, that if they were wise and well advised, though they might live as their

heart desireth here, and should never be called to their account for the same, yet they would fly from a licentious life, being but a sweet poison, and would choose to spend one day godly, (even for the fruit and pleasantness of it) rather than a thousand days otherwise: which many heathens in their kind, and according to the light and knowledge they had, as Cato, Scipio, and others did, that is, in moral virtue and honesty, to the perpetual shame and just reproach of many which go for Christians.

And this is that which I go about, that in this shifting and godless world, some who are very willing already to be guided well, but are unable to direct themselves, may have some help by this which I have written: who if they should be hindered thus, namely, that they think, for all that can be said, yet there will be wanderings out of the way, earthliness of mind, frowardness, and much rebellion, and therefore to small purpose it might seem to be, to take great pains for little profit: I say (by the grace of God) their profit shall be great, and their pains small, for the benefit which they shall reap by it, yea in time it will become pleasure to them, after they shall accustom themselves daily to seek the Lord in such manner, as I have here taught, and as his word prescribeth, and they shall see their strongest rebellions much weakened, and evil desires much abated and asswaged in them, and they themselves prepared and made fit by this well seasoning of their hearts to make the actions of their lives correspondent.

And to uphold ourselves in holiness thus as it is required of us, no less help is needful, then the daily keeping of our hearts in this estate, which I have set down. For although while the heart is thus looked unto, (as it would be of us, if we counted it the necessariest work that we have to do throughout the day) while the heart (I say) is thus looked unto, everything doth well follow our hands, and much

good is done in our lives: so yet, except we make great provision, that this work may be daily and constant, we cannot choose, no not the best of us, but we shall commit many things in our lives unbeseeming our profession, and smally to our own comfort. And howsoever the rebellious world cannot away with it, yet (as I said before) all the godly, if they knew it, and so far as they do know it, do aim at it, and would think themselves happy, if they could be partakers of this liberty: I mean, when they can and do advisedly, and with good consideration keep steadfast daily in this holy and sweet course, and are not perverted and turned out of it, as sometime they have been.

I confess, all are not in a like measure enlarged, either by knowledge to see the excellency of it, (as I have said) or in heart to desire it, seeing they are not acquainted with it: but yet when they do see, how God of his abundant kindness, hath showed them a way to make their lives more pleasant, and his service more easy, then they have thought or could find; they will wish a part in this wisdom, thus to guide themselves, before all other pleasures, though the flesh should never so much rebel against it. And it must be granted, that the heart will strive sore against the continuance in this course, and rebel and be discontented with this, that all unlawful liberty should ever be denied unto it. But as they shall see more clearly into this blessed estate, and have daily more experience, both that God doth give them power to mortify and overcome themselves, and make this holy course sweet unto them, the more their hearts shall be set upon it, to desire and long after it, and to have it in an high account, which is the greatest matter, and the hardest piece of work to be obtained, especially with continuance and steadfastness therein.

For if it were men's pleasure and delight throughout the day to be well occupied one way or other, and in all that they should go about,

to have their hearts ready to guide them aright therein, all other gain-saying desires of the flesh should soon be withstood and resisted, and the occasions, by which they were wont most of all to be hindered and withdrawn, should be shunned and avoided. And this may much set them forward in this course, that if they seek to retain constantly any one of these eight rules, which are set down to guide them daily, they may know, that it will be no hard matter to enjoy all the rest with it, seeing they hang together as links of a golden chain. For they cannot arm themselves with a mind free from the love of sin present, but they must be repentant for their sin past, and embrace forgiveness by faith, and find rest to their souls, and filled with thanks: and so I say of the rest, if they know this point of God's will, that he requireth it, that one of them should daily go with the other, as indeed the one cannot be without the other.

And if any say, be like I go about to make men perfecter and holier, then the Lord ever did, and to persuade, that they may serve God without strife and battle with their own lusts and the devil: I ask them again, if this course of daily keeping our hearts in frame, and spiritual government can be without most diligent observing of our ways, and strong setting of ourselves against all adversary power? And further, I answer, that I go about no other thing then this, that God's servants may be best fenced against the common corruptions which are in the world through lust, and may honor God in the best manner, and themselves live with the most comfort, and that they may know and be persuaded, that he of his mercy hath provided this sweet path-way to heaven, for his poor servants, who are despised in the world. And they who have not as yet experience of this seasoning of their hearts with grace daily, I wish them to desire it above all other things, and in no wise to hold themselves contented without it, if they desire to do well and to see good days. And let me obtain this at the hands of all well-meaning Christians, that they believe it.

But now I having spoken of the foundation, that should be laid in the heart of all God's people, upon which the building of a godly life every day is to be set, and without the which (endeavored after of everyone) it can in no wise stand; and that is, an heart endued with the several gifts of the spirit, which I have set down; I have thought it very meet and necessary to add one thing to this which I have said: and it is that, which the diligent reader will require and look for, especially if he be not well experienced in the practice of Christianity. And this it is: why men are not directed how to lead their lives daily, and to govern their tongues, as well as to rule and beautify their hearts, and why they have not direction how to do all their outward actions daily: (for of these, they say, no rule hath been set down in this whole treatise) but only of the well ordering of the heart; whereas that toucheth but some part of men's duties in the sight of God: but all other things are left (as it seemeth) to our own discretion, which are to be done in the eyes of men.

To the which I answer, that the heart of true Christians being kept thus purged from evil, and seasoned graciously, (as we have heard) good life and behavior will come from thence, as Solomon saith: and according to the diverse occasions, which shall fall out to everyone daily, his knowledge shall and will guide him either in his calling, or in the supply of it, by other necessary duties: but more particularly, they must not look that there can be any certain direction given of the outward parts of our lives, which of them should be done every day: because the actions of our lives are variable for the most part and innumerable, as all do know; and therefore cannot all be done upon any one day: and men are constrained by sundry occasions to do some duties one day, and some on another: and oft it falleth out, that such as they must of necessity do on someone day, or else they shall sin; (as following their callings painfully and diligently) they cannot do on some other, but they shall sin; as to visit their parents

on their death bed, or make peace betwixt men, when it is required at their hands.

But further, and to the more full satisfying of such as would desire it, this I say; that although there can be no certain and perpetual rules given more particularly, which are as necessary one day as any, (except we would lay burdens on God's people which he himself hath not done) and those concern the heart inwardly, not the outward conversation: yet there are certain duties of the life performed in the sight of men more commonly and usually, then some other; and they are such as do concern all true people of God, and for the most part, fall out every day at least one or other of them, if not all. These therefore which shall be of so great use among God's servants, I think not amiss to set down, and so to satisfy their demand so far as God's word giveth leave: not of necessity to tie any to the practicing of them every day, (which I would have well to be marked) but as everyone seeth that he is bound: yet someone or other of them must be done every day, as we shall see afterwards. And for the other which do not bind the conscience every day, (which I do set down now immediately following) and yet are profitable, and helpful to live well and happily: let a Christian use them, and so many, and as oft as he may, and as he hath occasion offered him, and as he gaineth thereby in godliness, and winneth peace to his heart, and knoweth not how to do better, seeing it is an hard thing for the most Christians to see particularly, how to pass the day in the particular parts of it from one hour to another, (especially when they must intermit the works of their calling) but it shall be in an idle and very unprofitable manner, without some such help and furtherance. A brief sum therefore of these I will set down, with some short explication, and utter my mind more fully of them afterwards. And they are never done aright nor in their kind, except they proceed from the heart well ordered, as I have said before. And they are in number nine: the first whereof is this:

## CHAP. 10.

Of outward duties of life, most commonly to be done daily, but not of necessity.

The first, that we awake with God.

That is to say, that as soon as we have broken off our sleep every morning, we bend and resolve with ourselves to give unto the Lord the first fruits of the day: and that either directly, by thanksgiving, confession of our sins, and request making for ourselves and God's people, we lift up our hearts to God in a brief manner: or indirectly, that is, though we tie not ourselves to this manner and form, yet that we make it our first work after our awaking, to common with, and look up to God, drawing our hearts to the love of and rejoicing in him; that he being first in account with us, may be also throughout the day chief with us, and present to guide, bless and comfort us: and that we do this, till in a more solemn manner we see ourselves apart from other things to prayer.

The second, that we provide (if it may be) solemnly and upon our knees, to make profession of our repentance by confession of our sins, requests made to God, with thanksgiving, taking to us words, as Hosea speaketh, that is, with our mouths uttering them, preparing ourselves by meditation hereunto.

That is, before we enter into the affairs and dealings in the world, (if it be possible) we make this our first work of the day: and in our confession, let our special sins be mentioned, by which we have most displeased God: in our thanks, let some particular favors of God be remembered: in our requests, let us crave pardon of our sins with faith to obtain it, and all other necessities; and namely, that we may

well go through the day, and have God's blessing in all that we shall set our hand unto in the day. To proceed the better in all these, let us meditate either on some of God's mercies, or our own sins, or on some other things profitable; that by meditation and prayer before we enter into our affairs, we may be the better prepared to pass the whole day after in much better sort, then otherwise we might be like to do.

That (if it shall then be most expedient) we with our minds still kept well ordered, betake ourselves to our calling and vocation.

That is, that we willingly and diligently set ourselves to perform duty in that work or service, for the which we are fitted, and to the which we are called: and therein abide as we are able, except any weightier matter draw us from it: assuring ourselves, that we please God no less therein, then in obeying his other commandments. And that we be therefore cheerful therein, (it being the business that God hath set us about) and confident, that we shall find good success, seeing we have a promise of blessing from him; and so doing, that we take heed, that we mind not our profit in such wise, that we cool any grace thereby, or quench holy affections in us: but that we be fit to go from it to such other duties, as shall be meet, that so we may do our earthly business with heavenly minds, which is an high point of godliness, and make them and holy exercises, helps one to the other.

That in all companies we behave ourselves, as we are taught of God, and as it becometh us: especially so, as we leave no ill savor behind us.

That is, seeing some part of the day is usually bestowed in company: therefore in what company soever we shall be, either of our own family, or strangers, superiors or inferiors, and how oft soever, that we have special regard to be harmless, and free from giving any ill



example, carefully marking and shunning the occasions thereof, and provocations thereto. And that we be ready by all opportunities, to take any good that we may, either by example or communication from others: or do good ourselves by offering both. And that in any of our dealings with men, about or in the things of this life, we neither hurt or do wrong to any, but rather suffer it, knowing how we are given to love our selves, and in matters of profit especially, with the neglect of others: which among Christians is a sore blemish.

That we do not ill spend the time in our solitariness, or when we be alone.

I mean, that at such times, as wherein we shall be free from company, we have the like care of our hearts and behavior being alone, that we were taught to have of them both, and of our talk in company. For example: that in our behavior we attempt or go about no evil, as stealing, whoring, or committing any unlawful thing, &c. and concerning our hearts, that we suffer them not to wander after needless and vain things, but hold them within this compass, that either our thoughts be of those things which are lawful, as the well ordering of our business, and yet that also with moderation: or of things holy and spiritual, as the glory of the life to come, God's love to us, and care over us in this world, and such like; considering and remembering, that we must redeem the time to the best uses we can, and in conscience most approve of; or if our thoughts be at any time of things evil, that it be only to bring us into further hatred and detestation of them, and not to engender and raise up a liking thereof in our hearts, which Satan ever intendeth, though we had no such meaning, nay rather purposed against it, when we first entered into thought of them.

That we use our prosperity and all the lawful liberties of this life, soberly, and so as we seek to be the better by them.

Forasmuch as our merciful father bestoweth upon us many great blessings even here where we be strangers, both in token that he can afford us them; and to show, that piety and the fear of God are not without reward, no not in this life. 1. Tim. 4:8. Therefore it behooveth us to be circumspect and wary, that we swell not, neither be insolent, because of our prospering; neither idle and loose in our lives, and so abuse the same to carnal liberty: but to be more rich and fruitful in all good duties both to God and men; because we know, that he which hath received much, of him shall much be required, Amos 3:2. And that herein is our heavenly father glorified, that we bring forth much fruit, John 15:9. And so we have the right use of God's benefits, which is a greater treasure then the benefits themselves, 1. Kings 3, as we may see by the fearful ends of such, as had many great blessings, but regarded not how to use them .

That we be ready to receive our afflictions meekly and patiently, and so be found indeed where we are tried with them, that our patient minds may be known to all.

Our lives are subject to many calamities, and every day to sundry: yet, doth not the Lord chastise us, for that he taketh any pleasure in our sufferings, but of very love sendeth them for our benefit, namely, to wean us from the excessive love of the world, and to purge out our dross thereby, that we might not perish with the world, but have proof of our faith and patience: which causeth the greatest joy of all other. Therefore we must not fret and be impatient in them, but confess, that they are necessary and meet, as oft as God sendeth them, and therefore wait to see a good end of them; that so we may

have experience of great good by them, which may make us hope for the like after, and that without fainting.

That we constantly keep and use the exercise of prayer and thanksgiving in our families, and such other helps to maintain the knowledge and true worship of God, and of true happiness amongst us.

For seeing we are forgetful of our duties, and easily drawn away by the world, we have need to have daily and oft access to God, and our servants especially, who have little other private help. These exercises of Religion are, prayer, reading, catechizing and conference, with singing of Psalms, &c. and that these or such of them as are common to the whole family, be used at the most convenient times when the family may come together: and that we endeavor to do the same together twice in the day at least, providing to perform the duty of it with cheerfulness and reverence, knowing that we have therein communion with our God, and most sweet refreshing of our souls thereby: always remembering, that this shall not be so awkly gone about, nor so hard as many find it, if other duties before mentioned, be carefully looked to.

That before we lie down at night, we look back to the works of the day, how we have passed it, that where we have had blessings, we may be thankful, and proceed in the like course after: where we have faulted and failed, we may reconcile ourselves to God, and so lie down in peace.

For seeing we have some special infirmities to make mention of, and some particular benefits to give thanks for, and to pour out our complaints in special manner, it is meet (as we shall be able) that we should thus view, and go through the several acts of our life in the day, calling them to remembrance as we can: that where we shall see

that we have received help and strength to live well, and to keep peace with God by the rules and duties prescribed, otherwise then we were wont before we did so particularly observe our ways, we may with praise to God, rejoice and take comfort in our gain, and more constantly hold out in the same course; and where we have failed, we may be willing to see and acknowledge our faults, laying hold of pardon, and look better to ourselves after: and so making agreement with the Lord, as being reconciled to him, and leaving no accusations nor checks to our consciences, we may lie down in peace, and fall asleep in that state (even as we awoke with it in the morning) ready to make our bed our grave, and so show ourselves to be pilgrims and strangers as our fathers were.

And these are the duties of our lives, falling out ordinarily, and most commonly to be done every day, at least some of them, and none more usually then these, which I have added: that thus, while these are well looked to, the daily direction, which doth (as we heard before) concern the heart, may not want matter to occupy and set on work the life, so as it may neither be idle nor unprofitable: and also to the end that every Christian may learn and see more clearly, what manner of thing a godly life is: for many are ignorant of it, and many who gladly would, for want of clear understanding of God's will herein, cannot tell how to go about it. Numbers think it to be a doing of someone or few duties, whatsoever the course of their lives be besides: neither yet to be tied every day unto that. Some think it is but to go to Church on the Sabaoth: and one thinketh one thing, and another another. To whom and to all other I say, that it is no less then a daily, and careful looking to our hearts and lives, as I have set down, (though it tie no man upon necessity to any certain outward work or duty daily, as I have said) and a returning again to this holy course, if by any occasion we have departed from it, yea though it have been but for a short season.

And because we are not, neither can be, always settled to abide at home in our own houses, where it were easier to keep some even and equal course in our lives, as we are directed by God's word, yea and sometime we be forced to be taken up both in the travel of the mind and body, more specially about some weighty matters, in which case we shall be ready much more easily to forget ourselves, and so become unsettled; therefore let this watchword be remembered and regarded: that if any such thing fall out, as by hasty and long journeys, attendance upon suites or great persons, change of dwelling place, or change of our estate from singleness to marriage, from poverty to wealth, or the contrary (as unusual matters do more easily unsettle) that in these, I say, and such like, when any shall fall out, we be more careful at such times to be fenced against all such occasions, then when we be void of them: and that we do this, as we love our peace and communion with God.

## **CHAP. 11.**

Of the benefit and commendation of the Direction.

Now I will proceed to the third point, namely, of the necessity, profit and comfort of the daily direction: and then more largely speak of these nine duties, seeing a Christian shall find so great use of them, that he may be in some sort helped thereby daily. Of this third part I shall not need to say much, if that be well marked and considered, which I have set down of the two former. For if it be granted, that God directeth us daily how to go through the whole course of our lives, and that he teacheth us what manner of guiding us this daily direction is (both which have been proved unto us:) who can doubt, but that it must needs be a thing of great account and reckoning, and of singular use, and gainful? Especially to all such as being of an

upright heart, are yet not so exercised in the Scriptures, nor so experienced (by means of the darkness and blindness that yet is in them, and of sundry other lets and discouragements) that they are able by their own private help to draw out of all their readings, hearings and knowledge which they have gotten, any indifferent form or direction to govern themselves.

Besides, many such enjoy not the ministry of the Gospel ordinarily, but as they get it by their painful travel abroad; and many (the more is the pity) do not tie themselves conscionably to preach the most necessary doctrine to their people, yea (I may say with grief) are altogether unfit to do it: and the diligentest Preachers and best able (for the most part) tarry not long to season the hearers thoroughly with such matter; but by death, or other occasions, are quickly removed, or so mightily discouraged by their people and the diverse kinds of crabbed, teachy, scornful, hollow, proud, profane, and the like ill qualities of them, or some other ways, that rarely it may be found, (what an admirable and lamentable thing do I utter in this golden time of 44 years peace, scarcely to be hoped for half so long again!) yea rarely (I say) it may be found, that in all this time there are grown many able to guide themselves with sweet peace, through their troublesome lives. And we who know, that men without direction by God's word, wander and walk in uncomfortable darkness, what can we better do for the easing and helping of them to their hearts desire, and satisfying of their necessities, then show them the easiest and plainest way to escape and come out of it, as God hath showed us?

And therefore for mine own part, I have endeavored in this work to do the same: and although neither fully nor perfectly to set down in a little room that will of God which is dispersed throughout the canonical Scriptures; yet, so far as God hath revealed unto me, that,

which I count the best treasure and commodity, that God hath bestowed upon me in this transitory life; and that which how small soever it may seem in the eyes of any, yet of whomsoever it be embraced and esteemed, shall be no less then I have said, that is, necessary, gainful and comfortable.

The reason is great: for that, whiles we walked before without some certain direction, we were never long settled, especially with religious minds, how to bestow the day nor the parts of it, in the actions of our lives, neither how to begin, nor how to end it; and therefore were much wearied and distracted with forgetfulness and rashness (I speak of good people) unsettled oft, and yet knew not how, neither how to return again. But since we have been guided more clearly and particularly, we have seen much better how one thing cometh to be done after another, and one duty not neglected for another, and so have been delivered from much toile and tediousness: by it we learn how to rise out of falls, and to keep well whiles we are well. It is profitable for all sorts, in what lawful trade of life soever they live, having already begun to change their lives, and thereby being fit and meet to practice it. And such are all that by faith in the Son of God are set free from their sin, and assured of his favor.

No other can well set themselves about it, but shake it off, as they do all other good things: which I thought meet to put the reader in mind of, that although he shall not see this doctrine commonly practiced in the world, yet he may not think it for all that, any novelty which God's word doth not warrant, or therefore needless for himself to go about. For some (no doubt) will be ready to count it over-strict and more then needeth, to be tied to any such thing, and to persuade themselves, that they may with some few duties doing, please God as well as they, who spend their whole life in searching out infinite points of God's will to practice the same: and they count that an easy

way to heaven in comparison of the other, which they think long and tedious.

But let such understand that they are not fit to make their use of it. They must be other manner of persons whom I speak to, or go about to persuade: for they who will weigh things advisedly, shall consent (I doubt not) to that which I say; and shall see further the danger of these men, who content themselves to stand at a stay, rather than to be led still forward in a fruitful and holy course: and so being much idle and unprofitable, imagine and conclude by and by, that it can be no otherwise with men, whiles they here on earth be absent from God; and so likewise that the Christian life is not such, or so pleasant as the Scripture everywhere affirmeth it to be; which is nothing else then to charge it with falsehood and lies: but many of God's dear servants do know it, and find by experience, that this Christian life hath no match, abounding in delights; yea, and those most sound, permanent and unspeakable.

To return therefore to them whom God in mercy hath called to assurance of their salvation, for they by such direction as I speak of, shall see the Christian life more easy by many degrees, then ever they found it whiles they walked after no certain direction before: such (I say) both poor and rich, Minister and people, one and another, may learn, and that every day through their life, how to keep company, how to be solitary, how to be occupied in their labors, how to cease from them, how to rise and how to lie down, and how to bestow the other times of the day; not discouraged at night though they did not all duties, (which in one day cannot be) but quiet and cheerful, seeing they did those which by good direction they saw most necessary. For they shall be taught by it to keep a certain proportion and agreement in their actions, that as one savoreth of Religion, and a godly mind, so may the other also: and as they speak and hear the



word well, so they may have their thoughts good also, and their hearts purged from whence both these do come: and as in their prayers to be holily affected, so in their husbandry, houswifery, feasting, journeying, buying, eating and other dealing: that so every part of the day in the diverse actions of it, may have the proper due thereof; which if it may be obtained, is not meanly to be accounted of, if we consider how many thousands, never taste of this dainty through the year (which we may enjoy every day:) yea, and for the want of it, have a woeful and a deceivable passing of the time, and for the most part wearisome and tedious.

Besides, we may by the benefit of it so be occupied in our earthly and common business, as from the same we may come readily and willingly to heavenly exercises (whereas the most come untowardly:) and also in the same business we may have our minds heavenly, and therefore our actions which are done thereby to be there after.

And whereas many even of good hope are wont to complain and say, that longer then they be in praying, reading or such like exercises, they cannot keep in any well-ordered course, any long time in the day together, but are distracted like others of the world which use neither reading, nor prayer: yet we by the help which God giveth us hereby, when we necessarily intermit them, and cease from them for a time (being occupied in our calling or other profitable duties) we (I say) may hold a good and well-ordered course in our other actions and business in and through the day notwithstanding. And more than this, when we can bring our hearts to look carefully to this as to our harvest, we shall get such a distaste in evil, in respect of that which we had sometime, that we shall have great liberty to forsake and contemn it.

And here for the better encouragement of the reader to look more carefully into this matter, and not to be dismayed by the strangeness and unaccustomedness of the thing to the which I persuade, I will faithfully report unto him the speech of sundry Christians, long taught, and of the best sort of such as had profited by the preaching of the Gospel (as far as I could judge) in those parts. When they first heard of any form of daily directing them, whereby men are taught to be every day kept in the same holy compass, that they should be any day: some conceived it not at the first hearing, seeing they had not been acquainted with it: secondly, some smiled at it, as thinking it impossible to be brought into practice: thirdly, some confessed that their hearts did rise against it, as perceiving, that it was a certain rebuking in great part of their former lives, which was a thing unwelcome to flesh.

But it appeared to be a fault in all three sorts, by this that they did afterward correct themselves. For when they saw further into it, and weighed the benefit of it more deeply, they were of another judgment, and said as a fourth sort did say when it came first to their hands; that they did highly approve of it, and that it ought to be so, and that for want of such help and direction, they had been much confounded and troubled in their course, and that they would have thought themselves happy if they could possibly have attained to the practice of it; wishing that they had been acquainted with it long before. For they saw in perusing the parts of this daily direction, which I have here set down, that their hearts and lives should be freed from many encumbrances hereby, wherewith they were before annoyed: and that they should serve God and live with men, much more cheerfully than they did before. And this is the sum of their first speech, which diverse honest and well-disposed Christians used: which I report for the further encouraging and persuading of the

Reader to a more free and willing receiving of this course, which I offer and set before him.

After this, they were advised, and exhorted to go about the practicing of it according to the several points thereof, after the right and clear understanding and due considering of it; and to show faithfully, how they felt it to help them forward in well passing the day, more than when they walked without it in the world: and which points of it, they found hard to be observed: and how they were letted, or what liberty they found more by it, in the governing of their lives, then when they looked not after it. Thus they were counseled to make trial of it by the month, and so by the quarter of the year, and to signify, whether any such daily course might possibly be fastened upon Christians, and with fruit, which (doubtless) few are acquainted with. And after trial made privately by themselves, they enjoining also the public Ministry to the further enlightening of them about the same, they confessed freely, to the praise of God, that they found and obtained more use of their knowledge, more constancy in their course, and sweet delight in serving of God then they ever looked for, or once could have asked of God, before they did in such particular manner look to their ways, though they had set their hearts to seek the Lord some while before. For they said, when they did consider, that God ought as well one day have his due at our hands as another (which they had not thought upon so thoroughly; but now by the help of this, they began to see more clearly: and that it was nothing beseeming the greatness and goodness of God, that he should be served by fits, and uncertainly; some day a little, some day nothing at all) they confessed, that they framed their minds of conscience, to look to their ways more constantly and carefully, and that in one part of the day as another: and more especially, that they did usually consider of, and call to mind God's love and kindness in his many mercies much more often, then in times past when they thought of them but seldom. And

hereby, they saw such blessing of God upon their labors and endeavors, that they were able with cheerfulness and without tediousness to pass the day in their calling, and in the performance of other necessary duties either at home or abroad as occasion was offered, which they could never do before, for any long time together: they were not unsettled by matters about family, nor so easily and readily passing their bounds, and over-shooting themselves, in dealing about their worldly affairs: they were not so soon provoked to unquietness by losses or other of God's chastisements, nor to break out into heart-burning, fretting and uncharitableness against such as offered them hard measure in speech or otherwise: they did now more narrowly view their desires and affections, which way they carried them, and what deceitfulness was in them; which yet for many of them, they had not before suspected, or at least, little labored against them: and how oft they had smarted by them, when they had not this regard daily. They saw they could willingly do one good thing or other in the day, for the most part, or at least keep themselves from evil, and were not mastered of idleness, or busying themselves needlessly in other men's matters: they were not usually so untoward when they went to prayer, nor walked in many of their actions so loosely, as they well remembered they had done before: they now could find matter to joy in, and make their songs of, (even the many kindnesses of God, which have no end) whereas their joy was wont to be in thinking of that which they had, or desiring that which was other men's, or dreaming of long life, &c.

And above the rest, this did exceedingly comfort them, that whereas they had oft times before that, been much shaken with fear, that they should not with any peace persevere to the end: now their experience in subduing their unruly affections, and setting themselves to frame their lives to God's will as they were able, and that for some continuance one day as another, did give them strong hope, that they

should much more easily do the same hereafter: yea and were persuaded, that if the Lord should exercise them with harder afflictions, then they had as yet sustained, that he would also uphold them even therein; and that as they should increase, so should their comfort increase, whereby they should be made able to bear them. So that this daily tying of themselves to record and think upon God's kindnesses towards them, in that he had made them happy, both here, had given them sure hope of happiness for hereafter, and the submitting themselves to be guided daily, did greatly amend them (as we see by their own confession) in their whole course. And what marvel though it was thus with them? For is there not (think we) a great difference betwixt a daily, and a seldom or uncertain view of our estate? Betwixt a particular observing our ways, and a general course in Christianity? For although men may have without such like help and direction, oftentimes their hearts well affected, yet will it be nothing like with then, as when they do with a resolute and constant purpose above all other things look to this one, and not to be removed from it, seeing it is the best of all, daily and through the day to hold fast the profession of their hope with joy, and to be careful to please God in one thing as in another. For then doth Christ's commendation of Marie reach also to them, that they count one thing needful; and they have chosen the good part, and it shall not be taken from them: when they can testify to their own consciences, that in their weighty businesses and dealings, and in their matters of pleasure and profit, they be thus indifferently carried about them; that this one thing is still counted needful, that is, by faith to rest in God, and still to be ruled by his word.

But to end my report of these Christians, for proof of that which they say of the benefit of the daily direction faithfully observed: they allege that it was not wont to be thus with them, no not since they had embraced the Gospel, had hope of salvation thereby; nay, and

that they were wont, as soon as they had been out of their beds, by and by to have their hearts set upon some light and foolish matter, or to have fallen into jars and brawls, or to be carried into the world, and so earnestly set upon the same one way or other, as that all goodness was forgotten: yea, and this also even since they had received some care to please God, and that prayer a spiritual duty of all other most usually intended to be frequented of them, yet by the least occasion was put by and omitted. And when the morning (which being the first part of the day, should be consecrated to the service of God, if in any convenience it may be) hath been thus profanely spent and taken up, the whole day after (we may be sure) hath been suitable for the most part and answerable. So that they have not felt that sweetness in their lives, which by teaching they had heard to be granted of God to his people to enjoy: but contrarily, they felt much wearisome passing of the day, and clogging of their hearts with their corruptions; which since they took this order, hath been far otherwise with them, yea even in the new entrance into it (which we all know to be then weakest) much trifling out the time in company by talking needlessly of other men, or of their dealings, was wont to be common with them; and in solitariness a spending of their thoughts and desires after the like manner vainly, until they were able more wisely to discern how to give every duty in the day his time, and how to occupy both the one and the other throughout the day. But they have with hearty thanks to God protested, that after they had attained to this, they saw far more clearly into the practice of Christianity, then ever before they did, and found the Lord's yoke far more easy to them, and themselves settled with more sound peace in the leading of their lives. This report of some Christians, whom I know well, I have set down (where by this little, the rest may be conjectured) for the better encouraging of the reader to be acquainted with a daily direction for the course of his life, and that he should not rest in a general and uncertain obedience to God. And let

nothing that I have said of them, be thought needless or unmeet for us, as long as we can see good reason for this which they did.

But know we, that this kind of serving God, both may be, and is, and hath been (God be thanked) used of many of God's servants, though I will not say in a like manner, and ought to be of the rest, as everyone shall be able to see into it. And therefore I purpose to thrust no fancy nor conceit upon any, but that which all well advised persons must justify, to be the commandment of God: and which bewrayeth too plainly, that many professors of the Gospel have not so much sought for the sound practice of a godly life, by reading the stories of holy men in the word of God, as to report generally that they have been holy; neither have reaped that benefit by the Scripture, in enjoying a sweet life above other men, as the Lord in much mercy hath afforded them.

For though the sect of the Family of love, the Church of Rome, and sundry other lying spirits do fancy a course which the Scripture knoweth not, and some of them also fantastically have for every day in the week, devised an order to be followed, as the reading of certain tasks, nothing less than proper to direct their lives: yet in this, which I here propound, namely, that we should be daily directed in our whole course, I have followed no fancy and dream of man; but have in all good conscience spoken from God, and drawn it from the Scripture both for the learned and simple, high and low, one and other, and is never in vain to the right user of it: although I deny not, but that a skillfuller handler of it, might have set it down far more exquisitely.

But from whence is the difficulty that it is no more in practice, being a treasure of so infinite value, and that so many pray, and some of them often, to lead a godly life; yet when and where they should not,

there they favor themselves, and say, they are weak and unable? From whence I say is this, but from hence, that they will put no diligence thereunto, to observe their ways in which they prosper, and contrariwise? Also there is no answerable travel, nor labor for skill and experience in this Christian course, to that which is in all other; but every little is tedious to them and wearisome. They are seven years at other trades to learn them, though they be apt to them, and forward in them, before they are thought fit to occupy by themselves.

But yet without seven years or seven months diligent exercising of the rules of Christian life, (for before they be converted to the obedience of God, what reckoning is to be made of their professing?) they will be thought fit to do as the best in this trade of Christian living, although it be clean against their nature. Nay I say more, he is a rare man, who can be persuaded to be guided by religion and the rules thereof, but seven weeks constantly, I may truly say seven days: for if he who would but so long give over himself to live by faith, and walk with God, he would never seek to be loosened, and set at liberty again to his old life, but would renounce it utterly, so great should his advantage be in this course and trade.

And as I know, that this is the main and greatest cause, why so few are lights and examples to others, so when people are taught the truth clearly concerning this matter, (for I am sure that it is neglected of many through ignorance) let them either resolve to be governed through the day, and from day today, or let them look to find small rejoicing in the Christian life with much uncomfortableness, which otherwise need not to be. And therefore in the fear of God, let men think and judge of themselves as God's word teacheth them: yea, let them profess as they be, or let them look to find as they be, and not as they profess. But as the most do handle the matter, they shall find it harder to practice a Christian life after



seven years twice told, then the hardest trade after half seven. And as it is with many of them who never learned their occupation well, that they are never skillful in it, nor thrive by it as others do: so one especial cause why many never practice godliness to the welfare of their souls, neither prosper nor be well liking therein, is: because they never soundly learned how to live godly for continuance, and constantly one day as another; but pieced and patched up the same with here a good deed, and there another, and in being sometime devout and zealous, the most of their actions being unregarded: and of many of them it may truly be said, the power of godliness was never thoroughly rooted and settled in their hearts.

These rules and the like for the daily directing of a Christian, are to be well conceived and approved in our conscience to be such as are very fit and profitable to guide us, (the which, whosoever hath the spirit of God, doth or may discern) because they are according to the word of God, and practice of his children, and so he yieldeth to them: and of every such they are duly and daily to be regarded, so far as God giveth him to conceive of, and see into them: this endeavoring to practice them will bring a man increase daily of sound liberty and freedom from bondage to his boisterous passions and unruly life, and recompense an hundred fold in sweet peace all his loss in earthly and vain delights, which he was wont to make the flower of his garland.

And seeing they will work upon the simplest whose heart is upright, and which the Lord hath opened to conceive them, therefore when thou seest that thou art such a one, and that thou hast felt them, (these rules of direction I mean) to persuade and draw thee on to follow them, forgo not this liberty, neither fall from this holy beginning, neither quench thou this flame of grace: but cherish it in thee daily, and trust not the fleshly wisdom of thine heart, (whereby

thou mightest be discouraged) seeing thou hast often proved and found it deceitful: but inquire into it still every day, lest some poison should lurk secretly in any corner of it, to wait thee a mischief, and to give opportunity to thine enemy to make thy hurt yet greater, and therefore cast it up as vomit: and if, after thou hast had some good use of this or such like direction, thou shalt feel it to wax common, and unsavory to thee, (unless thou art sure, that thou changest for the better) take courage unto thyself, and cast out that devil by fasting and prayer. Provide that thou mayest continue it, and happy shalt thou be both here and hereafter: and if thou think this be little that I say, tell me how thou shalt speed better any other way.

Think not upon the many years in the which thou art to continue it, to discourage thyself thereby, as though thou tookest in hand a thing impossible, or toilsome, for the beginning is the hardest: and as young children are to be led here a step and there another, till they can go alone; so go thou about it first by weeks, and so by months, till thou hast gotten experience for a whole year or more: after which time, thy difficulty will be well over; and thou shalt find it a more easy yoke and light burden to thee by many degrees, then thou wert wont. And while I exhort thee to the diligent regarding of this daily direction, I do not call thee either from seeking knowledge, or from the practicing of any necessary duty which might be required at thy hand: but I encourage thee to both; as that thou shouldest so store and stuff thyself by all means as thou canst, that out of this store and treasury thou mayest fetch matter daily to furnish thy life withal, and be made fit unto every good work in the day.

This is such a guide as is able to carry thee safely, as I have said: howbeit, if it shall please God to bring to light a plainer and sounder, be ready to embrace it; but rest thankful to God in the mean season for the help thou mayest have by this. But for my weak brethren's

sake, whom (while I go about to help and set forward,) I would be loath to hinder and discourage, this I think good to add: that they who cannot yet apprehend the whole, neither see it possible to be guided by every of these rules which I have set down, let them be ready to do better than they have done, as they shall be taught; let them be willing to add somewhat to their hearing, reading, and prayers both in time to do them offer, and in fervency, to quicken them to endeavor more carefully to practice that which they shall be able. I know all cannot be partakers of the same measure of grace, and yet one and the same direction is fit for the strong, and the weak; and he is in good way, who is willing to be directed: only, this is the caveat which I give to my brethren: Let not that be despised in a scornful manner, which men well understand not; nor upon stomach refused or disliked, which they sufficiently weigh not, and all because it cutteth off many parts of bad behavior, which they cannot readily cast off, and depriveth of vain liberties, which they were wont to use when they knew no better. He that frameth himself faithfully to be led by any one of the fore-mentioned rules constantly, will desire and shall obtain a part in the rest as I have said: although there be not present strength to accomplish that which he desireth, seeing faith in him is weak, whereby he should come by and attain it. And to such I speak, not doubting to assure even them, that God will give them a blessed fruit of this travel, how far soever they feel themselves off from possibility of taking good by the same.

And as I desire to help these, so I would be glad to satisfy others, as much as I can, though they be as yet further off from eternal life than they. And therefore if any such shall demand (when they have seen and considered these rules for their daily direction:) What shall men do through the day besides the looking to their ways and hearts, as is before set down? For nothing (they will perhaps allege) hath been said of the sundry actions and the particular kinds of the dealings of

men, which go through their hands in the day, which are things indifferent, and may either be done, or left undone: and it would be looked for (say they) that in a direction for the day it should be prescribed, how everything, yea the doubtfullest actions should be done, and somewhat said thereof, that men may see what to go forward with, and what to lay aside.

To such as would ask this question, not much differing from another before propounded, I answer: that none may imagine, that I go about any such thing as to prescribe what particular actions, companies, or dealings every Christian should use and be conversant in every day, (that were no less absurd then impossible to dream of) or of things indifferent, which of them he should do, and which are to be undone: but this I say, whatsoever behavior, actions, words or company will not stand throughout the day with these, (I mean with the rule of Christianity in the Epistle to Titus. 2:11, namely, to live soberly, righteously, and godly) let them avoid them: and whatsoever going about them, or manner of doing them, will not suffer them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts of all sorts through the day, let it be far off from them; as in their talk, jesting, scoffing, quarrelling, idle words, and all other unbridledness of the tongue. In their behavior, lightness, looseness, sauciness, sourness, loftiness, stubbornness, and all unrighteousness, let them be strangers unto them; and whatsoever else is of ill report, let them have nothing to do with it any day.

Which, they who are careful to live under an ordinary ministry, shall in time more particularly be acquainted with: so shall they find most sweet and sound peace to their soul, and have their life multiplied with true comfort. And if they think this hard, as though they should sustain some great loss hereby, what do they lose but that which they are well rid of, (although no other gain were to be gotten hereby)

even that which only troubled them, namely, the lust of the heart, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. All which fight against their soul, and after they fill in them, will bring them to destruction. And this for the satisfying of all reasonable persons, who yet through ignorance may think it much to be tied to any rules, whereby their lives should be guided daily.

## CHAP. 12.

Of the declaration of the first duty of awaking with God.

And of the first three parts of this treatise, thus much. Now for the better understanding of the nine last mentioned duties, and more clear insight into them, (especially for the help of them, which cannot so easily gather so large a matter out of so few words) I will more fully open every branch thereof one after another. And whereas I teach Christians in this place first, when they awake to be with God, and to accustom their thoughts to be holy, I mean indeed so much: that so soon as they awake, they should be taken up about heavenly things, (for where their treasure is, there should also their hearts be) as to think of God's kindness and love towards them, and that they abide still in his favor, as at any time before: the remembrance whereof at our first breaking off our sleep, what can be like sweet and comfortable? Even as a prisoner condemned but to temporal death, doth on the contrary, at his awaking out of sleep, fall into most dreadful thoughts and fear. They are also to think how they have been refreshed by their rest, and kept from the manifold dangers of the night, &c. by the which many have miscarried. And all these and such like meditations should salute them, when they first awake, to this end, to revive that soundness of heart, wherewith they lay down the night before (if they lay down as became them:) and also that no root of bitterness break out of them to stain their actions at their first entering into the day: which were very like to be, if it should not be prevented, and held out by some such gracious thoughts. Also by this means, they provide well for the better keeping their lives in frame all the day after: without the which regard had, in purpose to perform it as soon and as well as they can, they are so ready to range

and go astray one way or other, that although they did lie down the night before in peace, and with quiet and meek hearts; yet, the devil (as we know it well) watching his opportunity, they may easily be unsettled; and so, run into sundry evils, which cannot be avoided.

All which being considered, who doth not see, how great a mean this kind of awaking with God is, and how worthily it may be reckoned for one of our duties, to endeavor to take up some time thus when sleep departeth? Neither let any object, that this is more than poor Christians can attain to (for all such would fain attain to that grace, if they were taught how, and directed) the Lord having framed and fitted them for it, even by this, that he hath made them Christians, and therewithal hath given them hearts, which are willing thereunto: but yet every man in his measure, and as he hath received of God, which giveth to no man miserly, who seeketh heartily. And if this satisfy not some, who desire to begin the day aright after their first perfect shaking off of sleep and awaking: let such for their better direction, break their minds to those who through longer experience are better exercised in the ways of the Lord then themselves.

Only this caveat and watch-word I give, that if through barrenness in good things thou art not able to set thine heart a work (when sleep is gone from thee) to fasten upon somewhat that is profitable to thy soul, or to thy companion, if thou hast any with thee: arise, if it be convenient: if not, and that thou feelest thy heart to be carried unto profaneness, or to cause thy mouth to sin any way, check thyself, rebuke thine heart, and so take occasion, even by thy evil, to do good: And remember him, who at his first awaking's in the morning, did thus give unto the Lord the first fruits of the day, as I have taught thee to do; as in the Psalm, where he saith: O Lord, thou wilt hear my voice early in the morning. Early in the morning will I direct my words unto thee and will look up: and in the Proverbs, Wisdom shall

commune with thee when thou wakest, and guide thee when thou walkest.

The words of the Psalm, although they be not to be understood only of the time of our first awaking, yet they include that time, as well as any other in the day: but that place of Solomon doth plainly show, that it ought to be as usual and ordinary, to set our hearts on work about some holy and heavenly things when we first awake, as it should be, to look to be guided by God's word all the day through. And there is no doubt, but if this Scripture and such like were believed, and well weighed, directly tending to this end, to teach Christians to take up their hearts in holy cogitations and heavenly desires, before the devil hath poisoned them, and evilly employed them: and further, if they would be willing to see this first letting loose their hearts to sundry sins (as jesting, vain laughter, light and loose talk, jarring, contention, depth of worldliness, and such like) to be one chief cause of an unprofitable, yea an offensive life in the day afterwards; it should be far better with them then it is.

I mean, if they would thus do, they should find much more ease in serving of God, and fruit therein, and comfort thereby, both in the morning and all the day after: whereas I see with mine eyes, and hear it with mine ears, that many pass the day very unbeseeing Christians, who have long sought the Lord (though only in a general manner indeed:) and others see, that it is not with them so well as both it might and they themselves know it should be: who do perhaps someone time in the day now and then go to prayer, but otherwise they have little regard of many their actions: and yet their prayers which they make, are not, for the most part, poured out to God, till their heads and harts both are so filled and fraught with the world and other matters, that they have made themselves in a manner unfit to pray.



And as for such as say, they have other matters to think on as soon as they be awake, and they cannot bestow their time after that manner, it may please them to know, that as for the time (if their heart were ready and did know how to do this duty) it might very sufficiently and well-nigh be performed in so much time (for a need) as the Lord's prayer distinctly uttered might be said over in. For in such a space might a Christian lift up his heart to God, and salute him with an holy remembering of his fatherly kindness, and namely, for present preservation in soul and body, and confirm himself in his former sound-heartedness: which, if he did no more, were a true and right awaking with God, and the only right way to think of other things as they ought.

Therefore with thine heart thus seasoned (if it may be) address thyself to be ready to any duties which thou hast to do, and be strongly persuaded and confident, that God, who loveth thee so dearly (as in thy prayer thou believedst, and in thy thanksgiving thou didst acknowledge) that he (I say) will be with thee, to guard thee from all adversary power of Satan and his instruments, which might rise up against thee, and by the comfort of his holy spirit keep thee from evil: for he which hath all power in his hand looketh down from heaven, and beholdeth all the earth, to show himself strong with them, which are of an upright heart towards him: and therefore be encouraged thereby, with confidence to set upon any duty, and to withstand any evil.

And further, remember that thou art armed by God with all furniture meet for the servant of God, with faith to believe all God's promises, with hope to be kept from fainting, with righteousness to perform all duty, with sincerity to do it with a single heart, with knowledge of the word of God to direct thee aright, and with the preparation of the Gospel of peace to be shod against troubles and dangers in thy

voyage to God's kingdom. Remember all these, and that thou hast not the right use of these, except thou beest settled against the discouragements, which might stand up in thy way. And therefore be cheerful and of good courage, although there are many things which may, one time or other, put thee to trouble; and many occasions of unquietness and unsettledness may arise, which also would otherwise undoubtedly sore-shake thee. Thus before thou goest about anything, it is requisite for thee to renew thy faith, that thou mayest rest freshly on God for his protection throughout the day, and wait to see it so, and observe that thou mayst be guided by him, and make thy heart merry in him: considering, that he is more to thee than all the world beside. And this for the declaration, and further laying open of this first duty, as with any convenience it may be done, to teach us, how to awake with God.

## **CHAP. 13.**

Of the declaration of the second duty, of beginning the day with prayer.

Now when thy heart shall after thy first shaking off thy sleep be lifted up to thy God, set thyself to the next part of thy duty; prayer, confession of sins and thanksgiving in solemn manner upon thy knees; casting off and renouncing such foolish and fruitless thoughts and fantasies as were wont and still may hold thee from this duty: and set upon it, as soon as thou canst conveniently, yea, if it may so be, let it be the first work that thou shalt take in hand in the morning season (except in time of sickness, when thou keepest thy bed, and then join it with the former rule, and make of both one: and pray shortly when pain giveth thee no further liberty, but yet fervently and more often.) But if it cannot be thy first work, yet let not thy

deferring of it be a breaking it off, if thou mayst perform it: neither let a light occasion cause thee to defer it; for such shall never be wanting, especially thine own unwillingness, or sloth: but when for some especial and weighty cause thou doest defer it, return (if it may be) after thy necessary business ended to the performing of it, and therewith, renew thy covenant of amendment of life.

And to express my meaning about this more plainly, remember and acknowledge the kindness of thy God in benefits daily and hourly received both to soul and body: and sometime particularly, that so thou mayst be more nearly knit unto him, and delight in him. For daily and oft thankfulness to God is of great force to subdue thee unto God, and to maintain a thankful heart in thee all the day following.

And let another part of this morning worship of God adjoined to this, be an hearty recording and viewing of thy sins, a bewailing and confessing of them to God, and accusing of thyself, with an especial remorse for those which have most troubled thee, and be humbled under the burden of them: that so thou mayest see thyself a wretched person, and infinitely indebted to God, and so withhold thy heart from insolency and security, and be broken-hearted, that thou mayst the better abide so after. And with both these send up loud cries unto the Lord, through Jesus Christ, confidently looking for pardon of them, that thus thou mayst find the death of Christ daily fresh, sweet and savory to thee, which the most do make too common and unsavory.

And pray also in faith for grace and power to mortify thy sin, and to direct thy ways, and for all earthly blessings; and by thine own necessities be moved with compassion towards thy brethren, even the whole company of the militant Church, who have the like need of

God's blessing as thou hast: and (withal) that those which are yet without, and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, may be brought home: that thus thou mayst both testify thy love to them, and daily remember and consider, how thyself and all other do depend upon him for whatsoever is good and necessary.

And to help forward this duty the better, some meditation or musing upon such things as may assuage the bitterness and corruption of the heart, and season it with grace, were a thing most requisite, as everyone may be brought to it. As for example: sometime, of our mortality; of the uncertainty and slippery estate of all things under the Sun; of the change of persons, times, estates; of the glory of the kingdom of heaven: sometime of our salvation, to make it more sure; of the duties we are to do in the day, and how we may keep ourselves from the defilements and sins, which we are in danger to fall into; of the occasions by which we are most like to be led to evil; and of the helps and means, with the sundry privileges of a Christian, which we have to withdraw us from the same; and sometime of any particular branch of any of these, and the corruptions of the heart, and of the Christian armor: of some of these or of the like matters, let meditation be raised before prayer be entered into, if it may be.

And because meditation is much out of use even among Christians, and therefore it will be found the harder matter to go about and take it in hand; I have therefore set down some meditations of all sorts, both briefly and in larger manner to help those, which without help cannot draw matter from their own experience to meditate upon, as I have before set down a short Treatise about the same; that through the help of both, they may want nothing about this duty and Christian exercise, so that their hearts be framed and fitted thereto. This part of God's worship, namely prayer, confession of sin, thanksgiving and meditation, being conscionably and carefully used

and gone about before thou enterest into thine affairs and dealings in the world, thou shalt, in no mean sort, be prepared and enabled to pass the day in thy several duties doing, as thou art directed. All which may be well discharged and performed (after they be once well understood how they should be practiced) in one quarter of an hour, and less if need be.

And by this thou mayst see, what this part of the duty tendeth to, and what it requireth of thee, and how thou shouldest perform it. And as for them, which think that the doing of this ordinarily, is more than is needful, of whom every little duty done to God, more then they have already or do usually perform, is thought too much; let them know that the gain is very great. And as concerning them, which make a light matter of it, saying: that they are not now to begin this exercise in the morning, but do and have continued it, and yet they see no such fruit to come of it: To such I answer, that I fear that to use it as I have set it down, is not so common in practice, as diverse do take it to be: or else they should not say, that little profit cometh by it. For all such objectors are undoubtedly far from the right use of it; and one of these ways they swerve from it: that either they come not unto it with a humble and well-ordered heart; or they know not how to be occupied in it; or else some special sin is in the way to cause that it cannot as Incense, ascend up to God. The least of these faults may easily hinder the profit and darken the beauty of it.

I doubt nothing, but that at sometime diverse Christians in a holy and right manner do discharge it: but reverently and confidently to do it, laying all other things aside which hinder it, that I dare not affirm of many: which causeth the benefit of it, the less to appear to them. Which kind of men, if they cannot constantly tie themselves to it with delight, when yet they may very well, they should shame and put themselves to rebuke, for omitting it through sloth and

unwillingness; if by no other reason, yet by the practice of some of the devouter sort in popery: who although they serve God superstitiously, yet they observe their hours appointed to them after their blind manner (having only a confused and deceivable hope to be heard, I speak of the best of them) to the shame of such as who knowing better how to worship God aright, think it too much to tie themselves to anything more then they use to do: and that is, when they think good, or be driven to it in sickness, fear, &c. or in any other manner, (many times) that is, without the right and true properties of it: and then sometime I grant, and that in the morning (perhaps) they betake themselves to it.

But howsoever it be with such: the holy Ghost hath greatly helped the frailty of Christians hereby, who are by natural corruption (cleaving fast to them) provoked in the morning as soon as they are up, to be ranging abroad in the world, and according to their delights, dealings and occasions to be carried after them, either in vanity of mind, and lightness; or in unquietness, contention, quarrelling and worldliness, minding little for the most part but things earthly: and entering after this manner into the day, do for the most part go further from God all the day after. For this cause the holy Ghost hath taught them, that they should prevent these daily inconveniences, by taking up their minds and hearts to far better uses: that is to say, that after their awaking with God, they should (if it may be) repair to God more solemnly, which is done by meditation of God's power, mercy, &c. by thankfulness for benefits received and promised, by freeing themselves from guiltiness of God's wrath, by confessing their sins, and praying for the benefit of forgiveness, and for grace in the day against the evils thereof, and for good government throughout the same; that they being well seasoned thus in the morning, they may retain the savor, and hold the strength of such a gracious beginning (as I have said) all the day after.

And (to speak more plainly) that they being thus well fenced with this spiritual reviving of their minds, and heartening of themselves against all assaults, before they enter into the field with their enemy, they may be well armed against the battery of temptations and provocations, which will undoubtedly meet with them: and so keep their lives from the force of them, and from hurt by them in far better manner, then such can do, who being naked and destitute of this furniture, do lie open unto them, whatsoever conceit they have of their own wisdom and strength.

And this which I have said being well considered, I do not see what exception can be brought against this part of duty, unless any will further cavil about the time, which I said need not be much, after we have well learned how to bestow the same. To the which I tie no man, having showed what time the performance of such a duty doth require: and otherwise, I leave it to all to consider, whether their willingness, sufficiency in gifts, and their leisure will yield more time, or not so much; so as there be a faithful discharge of the duty, in such sort as they may rest therein with peace, and may feel themselves more fit to walk warily, and strengthened against the dangers which fall out in the day: which they in no wise should doubt of, if they do it sincerely. And now I have said of this second duty what I have thought convenient to him which desireth to use it to his profit; teaching him that is ignorant, how to practice it; and exhorting him that (through necessity of importunate business at some time) is constrained to omit it in the first beginning of the day, that yet afterwards he watch his best leisure and opportunity to perform it: and last of all, answered objections, as I have seen it expedient.

This only remaineth to be added: that we must consider, that these duties (which here I set down to be as oft performed as they may; and of which this is one) do serve to keep and settle us in the practice

of the daily direction before mentioned. Whosoever therefore desire to reap the fruit hereof by that which I have set down, knowing how to use it, but yet being often necessarily hindered; let them perform it when and as oft as they can: but they which are free from such business, ought fully to resolve and determine with themselves, daily to perform it if they be able; and not slothfully, nor for the favoring of the flesh to neglect it, as oft as they feel themselves unwilling to use it: for then small fruit is to be hoped for, as I have said before. Neither indeed, can any such omitting of it be any way excused, seeing we ought not at any time to be unwilling to such duties, (if it were always expedient to be with the Lord in this manner) unless we could prove to our consciences, that we are taken up in things more necessary. Neither can this desire be quenched in us (which the spirit of God hath kindled) but by our own fault, whiles we have through lightness, rashness, or in seeking some other unlawful liberty, expelled and banished the same from us.

But for as much as all other duties go well forward, whiles the heart is kept in love and liking with these holy exercises, and not otherwise (for pray well, and live well; and contrarily:) therefore this grace and heavenly affection cannot, neither may well be wanting in the servants of God. Insomuch that they which are not necessarily letted (as, by poverty; or otherwise, as want of leisure) are not to make this to stand instead of their family exercise in the morning (as being loath to bestow more time in such holy communion with God, then they must needs:) but rather they must begin the day with this after they are risen, and afterward with their household as the opportunity shall permit; I mean, as it will best stand with every ones business in the family. And especially preachers and students, and those which do enjoy many and great means, and who are not holden down with poverty, and such multitudes of outward calamities and hindrances, and whose discouragements be but small in respect of other men's;



such (I say) should not offer to God so miserly sacrifices, as they who can do no otherwise: but as they have received more, many ways then their brethren; so they should render more then they, both in this and other duties: for otherwise, who should be examples and patterns to the weaker sort, if such should not? And yet that I may discourage none, he that shall offer but his mite (with the poor widow) willingly, having no more, hath done as much as any other who having greater gifts have made longer prayers. Now if after the declaration of this duty in this manner, ought remain doubtful: let them seek resolution at their faithful teachers hands, that so they may more freely and with more profit continue it.

## **CHAP. 14.**

Of the declaration of the third duty, about our callings.

The third duty concerneth our callings and particular trades, the which we may be fit and ready to enter upon, when our minds be thus well prepared, as in the two former duties hath been declared. Know we therefore that with this well-ordered heart we are to take the same in hand, everyone as he is to be employed, throughout the day so long as is expedient, that we may safely and comfortably bring it to an end. About the which argument my purpose is not to write a treatise of all matters appertaining hereto, but so far to speak of it, as I may show that which I intended, namely this: seeing it is a great part of our life, to do the works of our callings, and a chief part of a godly life to do them aright, therefore to direct a Christian how to please God in the same; contrary to the opinion of many, (and those not of the worst) who imagine (but most unjustly) that their calling is such a let to them from the practice of religion, that thereby (though

they had no other) they are hindered from serving God aright. But they shall better be answered hereafter.

First therefore I will prove, that all Christians must live in some lawful vocation.

Secondly, that they must with practice of other godly duties, faithfully and diligently walk in the same.

Thirdly, (which will follow upon the two former) that they who do so, which the children of God only can do, may highly please God therein, and find great help and furtherance thereby to pass the other parts of the day well and Christianly.

And for the first of these three, it is clear by the words of the Lord himself (In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread:) that all men are bound to travel and labor (though not with the hands) in some painful estate of life, wherein they may serve God, and if need be, they may provide for themselves and theirs. At least wise, they may be good members in the Church and Commonwealth, as is meet for them to be, not idle and unprofitable. Unto the which rule the highest magistrates do submit themselves, being appointed of God to their places, that the people may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty: and therefore very unmeet it were, that any inferior to them, should range and live without compass in the world inordinately, as though they were exempt from the Lord's government. But I, as I have set myself to do throughout this book, will deal only with those who having submitted themselves unto the will of God in other things, are therefore ready to hear his voice in this.

All such must know and religiously persuade themselves, if through ignorance and long custom therein they should think otherwise, that

they must of conscience betake themselves to such an estate of life, lest otherwise living without a calling, as rogues, thieves, cousiners, common gamesters, parasites, and other disguised persons, they should loath labor, live upon others, and wax idle; and so run either into heresy, sects, curious questions, and fond opinions, or else into loose behavior, and wicked company: and then finding no savor in their religion, should fall away from the truth, and grow senseless, and frozen in their dregs and filthiness. As, not only we may read in the Scriptures, that some have done, which also were members of the Church: but have seen many carrying good show of zeal, and having many good parts in them, whereof some became profane and vain in their lives: others held strange opinions, and separated themselves from the Church of God, amongst whom they had lived familiarly before; neither were they to be blamed by men with any reproachful crime, which might be like to bring them thereunto, save only this, that they exercised no calling, but went about from place to place, and settled themselves in none, neither could be persuaded by the dearest of their friends so to do. But although a man could assure himself, that he should never fall to such a depth of sin, through the neglect of a vocation and following of a lawful trade of life (as there seldom cometh any better fruit thereof:) yet, what man would but so much as live unprofitably (if he may be well employed) when God hath made him for a far more excellent end? And bring discredit and ill report, and that justly, upon himself, having been had in good account before of his godly neighbors and brethren; or live inordinately, and so void of comfort, and that for neglecting the ordinance of God?

But to say no more of this first point: the next and the nighest degree hereunto, that may be, is; that many walk loosely and carelessly in their calling, and are slothful and negligent in the performance of the duties thereof (whereas they should faithfully and diligently be taken

up in their honest and lawful vocation:) which coming either of the ignorance of their duty, or of a mind too much given to seek carnal liberty, or of both; cannot be without dangerous discommodities. For what should the multitude of Christians do through the whole year, if they should not everyone walk and be daily occupied in some certain estate, some at home, some abroad, and therein have trial of their faith, patience, and obedience? Not that they might thereby wax worldly minded and the further from God, but get encouragement to serve him better as shall be said afterwards. For God in appointing but one Sabbath of all the seven days, hath sufficiently declared, that they cannot attend only to spiritual actions, as prayer, meditation, reading, and such like: and therefore hath for the most part of the week appointed them to show forth their knowledge and religious keeping of a good conscience, in being occupied about things of this life in their honest calling, wherein they may have work enough to be employed and taken up. Of the which matter as the Scripture speaketh many things to great purpose, so the Apostle chargeth every man to abide in that same vocation, wherein he was called: and commandeth them in the name of our Lord Jesus, to withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh without laboring, that so he might be ashamed. And that one place of Solomon is worthy our consideration, to the persuading of us to faithfulness and diligence in our calling, and to loath sloth and idleness, where he saith: The sluggard lusteth, but his soul hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall have plenty. And again: The riches of vanity shall diminish: but he that gathereth them with the hand, that is, with his own labor, shall increase them. And again: The slothful man will not plough because of winter, therefore he shall beg in summer but have nothing: yet a woman that hath a diligent hand, buildeth and upholdeth her house: with many other such like. In which he doth not only show what commodity a man's labor and diligence in his calling bringeth, and contrariwise: but especially commendeth

painfulness and travel, how good, and beseeming Christians they be. He alloweth not (we see) sloth, idleness, and over-reaching heads, in the servants of God; but showeth, that it agreeth well with the best of them to be diligent and well occupied: and that it is not too base and unbeseeming the honor of their profession, to labor and take pains; which the devil too readily persuadeth many: yea, and therefore he saith in another place, (seeing a mean and poor estate might be thought reproachful) that better is a little, even a dish of green herbs with peace and love, then a stalled ox with an unquiet conscience and strife. It is the more lamentable to see how numbers degenerate in this point to their own great hurt, and drawing others after them. Some not so well advised and stayed as were meet for them, are ever meddling in other men's matters, and leaving off their own calling spend much time in prying and searching into other men's living, titles of their lands and leases: and busying themselves needlessly, yea and oft times to the great hurt, offense and just complaint of them, with whom they live and seek to have to do. Others, as busy-bodies, and as though religion consisted therein, do as it were make a trade of observing other men's faults, neglecting too much their own: and sow dissention, and set debate betwixt neighbors, and with their evil tongues, bite and reproach such as are better than themselves. Others trifle out their precious time in seeking of acquaintance, not such whereby they may take good or do good, but spend it in play, jesting and merry-making amiss and profanely, &c. Others occupy themselves in dealings and merchandize, not appertaining unto them, but far above their ability, yea, and skill also many times, occupying their trades with other men's goods; and whiles they keep within no bounds, by aiming at great matters without any warrant, do gain less than nothing for their labor, and disable themselves to their own calling: besides this, that their unwise dealings that way, and departing from that business, which they were more fit for, and appointed unto, doth injury, yea, and undo others oftentimes as well as

spoil themselves, till they come to this: that they cannot dignity, and to beg they are ashamed. There are many other ways beside these, drawing men from their callings, which seem pleasant, but the issue thereof proveth far otherwise: whereby many and those also of good hope, have given themselves to seek their liberty, and to be unburdened from their callings, wherein whiles they remained they thought themselves to be in a kind of prison; and therefore till foolish experience had taught them how they had been deceived, could in no wise be persuaded to serve God in them, as had been most meet for them to have done. These men and such like, of which sort there are many in the world, might have kept both peace to their consciences, and good report, and been freed from many evils, if they would have hearkened to the voice of God, which saith: He that laboreth not, let him not eat. And again: that man is borne to labor, as the bird to flying. But they depart from the ordinance of God, and show that (howsoever they profess themselves to be religious) they fell to these indirect courses from diligence in their callings for want of religion, which only doth rightly direct men how to follow them, as it doth to order all other things aright. But it may well be a duty of some account commanded of God, to make conscience of diligence in our particular callings, it is so few men's cases to perform it.

But whiles I commend faithfulness in men's calling, and find fault with negligence therein, I attribute no godliness to the very act of laboring; neither defend, that they are good Christians all, who are diligent workmen, and painful laborers in any calling; magistracy, ministry, or any other. I have said otherwise to them which mark well my words: only this I say, that to a faithful Christian who reformeth and studieth daily more and more to amend his life, diligence in his outward calling is no small help to live well and godly, and to keep him from many evils: but otherwise, if there be not good government over the heart and life daily, he may find

sorrow and misery enough, seeing he will not take his direction from God.

But the right following of our calling (to enter into the third branch) is in such manner and sort to use and walk in it, that it may be no let nor hindrance to us from exercises of religion, and growing in grace thereby: for no such labor doth God approve of. But contrariwise, we must so play the good husbands, that we become not worldlings, and such as find more sweetness and pleasure in our earthly dealings and the coming in of our profits, then in our heavenly traffic through the practice of Christianity: we must so follow our own business, and shun meddling in other men's matters unnecessarily, that we be not shut up in our own, without regard of our brethren, or care for their matters (when cause shall require:) for that were great unkindness and want of charity towards them, joined with too much self-love toward ourselves. To be short, we must so use the world, as though we used it not: not lifting up our hearts when we prosper, nor casting them down with deadly sorrow, when we sustain losses and discommodities; but so carry ourselves throughout, that we may be patterns and examples to other of right using the world: for so hath the Lord appointed men to live in, and use their vocations.

And this kind of walking in them, is highly pleasing and acceptable to him. For they who thus set upon common actions and worldly business are not carried after their own earthly minds, as men of the world; but set the Lord before them, and look what he will have done: they bridle their desires, which would else carry them after them. So Moses was faithful in all God's house: and Joshua in his place: and Job who had much to do in matters of profit and commodity, yet was a rare pattern to all men of using the world aright; even earthly things with an heavenly mind: that they may have the more to accuse them, and that justly, who will not in far

meaner affairs take him for their example. This regard must be had of all Christians, and of all sorts both of rich and poor, one and another, in their earthly dealings, (though it be a lesson most hardly learned) that whiles we avoid sloth and idleness on the one side; yet walking in our callings we be not worldly minded on the other side: that it may come to pass, that our calling being one part of Christian obedience and duty to God, may not only for the time while we are occupied in it, witness well to us, that we please him; but also make us more fit to other Christian duties after: and that we seeing this manner of passing our time to be enjoined of God, (who hath promised blessing thereto, and seeth what is good for everyone) and considering duly with ourselves the infinite fruit that cometh thereof, we may more willingly, and of conscience betake ourselves thereunto: that so we may find in this faithful walking in our calling, a peaceable course of living here, which may bring happiness with it in the end.

The necessity and benefit of this in a Christian, few do sufficiently know or consider. For all are naturally given to seek liberty amiss, and stolen waters (as it is in the Proverb) are sweet: and many who zealously profess a godly life, not painfully following some lawful calling, do by woeful practice prove this to be true; and so shall find much sorrow in their days, which others shall be free from.

Now to the end we may thus cheerfully go about them, as knowing that God alloweth such works of ours, and so thereby be disposed more readily to other parts of duty, (which we see to be no common thing in the world) first this must be considered: that it is the Lord that setteth us in our callings, and hath promised to be with us, and to give us good success in them, and to help us bear all tediousness therein; and further, that he hath willed us to do all such duties for his sake, in such manner as if we did them unto him, and from him



to look for a reward. Now what true Christian is there, who, if he believe this, is not encouraged to do his business readily and willingly? Who would not be glad to do anything which might please God? And whose heart should not be joyful to go about the Lord's work, whereby tediousness, unquietness and manifold unsettling's are removed? And so should we not grow out of frame, but have our minds readily prepared to other duties. And most sure it is, that men's callings and labors are so burthensome unto them, even for this cause, that they do not think thus of them. Neither are such cheerful at their work, but only for the gain, that moveth them, or for that they must needs: and being so unwillingly and corruptly occupied in them, neither are they fit for any good thing or duty after. The Minister who is consecrated by the Lord even to divine studies and passings of his time, and hath it enjoined him for his calling that he attend daily to reading privately, and to doctrine and exhortation publicly; how hardly obtaineth he it of himself (as heavenly and sweet a calling as it is) to abide and hold out therein? Yea and how few do it, (I speak even of such as have received good gifts of God, not of the worsers sorts only,) but trifle out their precious time as other do? As though it were little to be regarded which is written: He that winneth souls is wise: and they that have instructed others, shall shine as the stars. Dan. 12:3. And therefore of others whose calling is not to be occupied through the day in that heavenly manner, how were it to be looked for; if they should not of conscience tie themselves thereto, and walk cheerfully and faithfully therein? But when men shall know, and may be bold to remember and consider, that they are appointed by God to bestow the most part of the time in their callings, (though they be not merely spiritual actions) to the end that they may with better appetite return to exercises of religion again after; and that they have a promise of blessing therein: with what peace may they be occupied in them, and overcome that tediousness and wearisomeness, which would

otherwise cleave unto them? Thus I could wish, that Christian men took their callings to be in such sort enjoined them of God, that they neither durst neglect them, nor yet find them burdensome and wearisome to them: but that they could wisely see, how, when, and why to intermit them, that is to say, for necessary and profitable causes and considerations; as, for the ministry of the word, the visiting of friends, moderate, lawful and necessary refreshing's of themselves: and in good sort to return to them again more fitly. Furthermore, we shall not be unsettled by the works of our callings, nor wearisomely cast them off, when we shall be able to see, that we have practice of most duties in Christianity therein, as diligence, obedience, faith, patience, truth, &c. and thereby learn experience, that God who hath given us wisdom, cheerfulness, patience, and the rest heretofore, to bear the burden of them contentedly and willingly, when in the prayer of faith we asked it of him, will do the like for us, and minister the same grace to us, for the time to come.

Thirdly, we shall not be hindered from duty by our labors, but furthered thereby in the ways of godliness, when we consider that the Lord hath made them the chief means of our maintenance, assuring us, that we shall be fed: that so we may put away distrust, and depend upon God joyfully, and not be driven to depend upon unconscionable men for necessaries.

Lastly, God's people, by a faithful and diligent walking in their calling, have proof how God keepeth them in the way to eternal life, and in the way of peace, and freeth them from many dangers and sins (which fret as a canker:) for whiles they be diligent in their callings, they commit themselves and the course of their dealings to God, who hath promised to keep them in all their ways; and therefore to free them from the evils which meet with others, and so to hold them on in their way. Their good success they ascribe to God;

therefore it is a double comfort to them: their crosses which arise, they know are sent upon them by his providence for their good; therefore though they be bitter to the flesh, yet they (who are well advised under them) resolve, that they are necessary for them. And the hardest which can befall them, while they offer themselves to be guided by God therein, is ever to be borne and gone under, rather than the ordinary events, which follow the idle and ill husbands, as we call them. And a man would think, that it were an estate to be wished and chosen to live in (if it be well considered what plagues meet with the rangers and disordered persons, who are not subject to God) to be in account and favor with God, as godly Christians walking in their calling religiously, are; seeing it is said of them, Deut. 28. Blessed are they in the field, and in the house, their stock and store, &c. Now I have said that which I purposed of this point, for the directing of them who stand in need of this instruction, how to use their callings aright: a little I will add, to answer such doubts as may arise in some minds, from that which hath been spoken.

And first it may be demanded, whether gentlemen, and other who are blessed with abundance of things necessary for this present life, shall be bound to some certain calling, wherein they should serve God by their travel therein, benefit others thereby, and keep themselves from the dangers before mentioned accompanying those who live without a calling. Or whether it be not their calling, to live as gentlemen use to do: in riding and going up and down, to spend their lives in pastimes, pleasure, and doing what they list. I answer, as in all the rest, I speak to such as are willing to be reformed: and to such I say, If they be called to bear any office, let them attend upon it, and seek to be fit for it, and worthily discharge it: and therefore let such be acquainted with the laws of the Realm, as well as with the laws of God; and be counsellors and helpers to their neighbors about them: that they may be beloved of them, when they shall see, that with

Christian conversation they shall enjoy other parts of good neighborhood by them also. And let them labor to see their families well governed, and be careful (as Christians may with good consciences) to uphold their outward estate, and to continue it to their posterity. And such as bear no office, let them (being exempted from the labor about the executing of it, which is enjoined to the others) be occupied as they.

And seeing they are to serve their Prince and country with body and goods, advice and counsel, both in peace and war; they ought by all means to study how to prepare themselves to turn the many hours and days, which the most of that estate spend in games and pastimes, to other more profitable and necessary uses. Let them also be the first who shall provide and take order for the maintenance of the poor, to see good order in in their town, help to beat down sin, and punish evil doers, and set at one such as are at variance, and have their hand reached out oftener and more liberally then all shall behold, and yet for example sake, go before others in doing good according to their ability, not refusing to exhort and stir up, as occasion shall be offered, to love and to good things . These, one or other of them, are the works of their calling: wherein they shall be lights to other, render a good fruit of their wealth to God, and cause many to bless God for their love and labor. And what can they less do then this, if they do but consider, that of them most shall be required who have received most?

And for the better and more happy effecting of that which I have said, let them labor by all means to provide, that good teaching may be enjoyed and well used while they may, and put in practice that which is in the Proverb, 23:23. Buy wisdom whatsoever it cost: but sell it not whatsoever ye may have for it. And if they be wise, let them enjoy the more liberty in the reading daily of the Scriptures and other

good books: which is, with other such like exercises of study, the chiefest and principallest commodity, which they reap by their riches: I speak wisdom to them, which are sound hearted to receive it. But if they think, that God hath made their portion greater than other men's to the end they may run the further out of order, and that they may spend their precious time idly, vainly, and at their pleasure, without rendering account thereof; I am sure they provide worst for themselves, and shall wish they had been poor men, who would have made no such questions about the bestowing of their time, but would willingly in that mean estate have served God without reasoning. As for their lawful and honest recreations which are only in good sort and manner to be used, as I shall say in the next Chapter; they not making the same an occupation, nor themselves slaves to there lusts and pleasures, this which I say, withholdeth them not from the right use thereof. But of this enough: seeing my purpose is not to make treatises of every matter I touch.

I will proceed to another objection: The poor Christians would (they say) take pains willingly in their callings, but can by no means maintain their charge: what therefore shall they do? To whom, as I can say no less, but that they must not for all this, cast away their confidence, but believe that God hath many ways to deliver and provide for his, and that it hath not been lightly seen that God hath been wanting to his, no not in their outward need; and therefore though their trial should be unto death, yet to trust by lawful means to find help: so I must further say to others, who (neglecting their duty) do suffer them to want and might relieve them; that God will justly bring it against them, and lay it to their charge: such (I mean) as both by that good and Christian law of this land (worthy with all care and conscience ever to be executed) are made over-seers of the poor; and such also as having superfluity, and much more than necessary food and apparel, yet are not rich in good works, neither

do good to the poor, which are amongst them for that purpose. Judgment shall be to such without mercy, because they show no mercy: who if they be living members of Christ's body, which is the Church, must pity the bowels, and glad the hearts of their poor brethren. But rare are they, who do anymore this way then they needs must; though men's left hand should not know what their right hand doth: but they strive and fall out one with another, even for that they are enjoined by authority to give that little which they do. And for the poor themselves, as they may make their money to such as are fittest and readiest to relieve them: so they must bear their burden the more easily, because they have hope in Christ, and are by him exalted higher than most of their betters (I speak of the godly:) considering that all God's servants have their several crosses, to make them meet for the Lord.

I am sorry to speak it, but it is too true, that of such as need the help of others to the maintaining of them, there are too few who have ears to hear that which I have to say to them from the Lord, Jerem. 5:4. For they are foolish, as the Prophet saith: and know not the ways of the Lord, nor the judgments of their God. But for the few that do fear God, I say: let them so go to their work, as I have taught all true Christians to do; that is, that they make it not an uncomfortable toil, but wait for the promise, that they shall be fed: and stay up themselves by the examples of the poor widow, and the word that saith: Man liveth not by bread only: and again, The Lions shall be hunger-bitten, but they that fear him shall not want: and again, The Lord hath many ways to deliver his: and know they thereby, that sooner shall the stones be turned into loaves of bread, then they shall be forgotten, and starve for hunger; or else, he will provide better for them.

But to leave this, I may not omit one other objection, which is much amongst men: that whereas I have taught, that if a man be never so good a laborer, and diligent husband, and so walk painfully in his calling, yet none of all this commendeth him to God, if he be not religious also; men reply and say, that such of all other are most negligent in their business; as servants by name, who (they say) when their minds should be upon their work, are found oftentimes at their book and at prayer; other of them sitting idly, and little regarding their masters advantage: whereas they who occupy not themselves about religion, but are held in by fear, or drawn on by hope of reward, are for their masters profit, and go to their work lustily. Whereupon some have gone so far, that they have usually uttered this speech: that when soever they make choice of servants, they will never choose any which are religious. Which latter speech (I answer) if it were not added, the former part might more charitably be interpreted.

For it is not to be denied, but that as in other states, so there are many hypocrites among servants, who make profession of religion, as Gehazai and many did whom we read of: against whom I denounce by the word of the Lord, that they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: But to grow to this absurdity from thence, that all religious servants are such, and that they would not choose such to be servants to them; the least sin that it can be made, is: that it is a rash and a carnal speech, and so much the more faulty, by how much he that uttereth it, goeth for the better Protestant. For such declare that so their business be done, they can bear any rudeness, brutishness and disorder in their servants, and so the dishonoring of God thereby: for all such behavior must be looked for, more or less, in such as are not religious. But commonly such masters are justly met with by the servants, whom they so prefer before those which are religious.

Again, whereas they in that speech condemn all which profess, it is well known, that there are many servants who in their particular calling, in that they are servants; as well as in their general, that they are Christians, do glorify God highly, and shine as lights in their places to the shame of their accusers. And yet such masters might judge of their servants religious and Christian practice by their own, that all duty is not by and by to be looked for at their hands, which have some love and liking of the Gospel. Are they themselves so unblameable in their whole course, that others may not see as great wants and faults in them, as they see in servants? It is to be feared, that such (who will so speak as I have showed) do not give them always the best example: but if they do; let them catechize them also, beside the public teaching which they enjoy, who being already willing to live Christianly, yet if they be not diligently and lovingly taught, cannot so soon be brought to any great perfection. And this being done let them prove, whether religious or profane, be the best servants.

Lastly, of men's vocation this I add: that I have not so urged the necessity of laboring in it, but that if some through extreme poverty and want of stock be enforced to give over occupying, as having no other remedy (through the hardness of their hearts, who will forgo nothing to the relief and setting up of such and the multitude of other poor folk) if it be thus (I say) that they have no other remedy, nor be able to labor in any lawful calling, they may with the peace of their conscience receive alms and please God therein, keep their confidence in him, and grow forward in the further knowledge and practice of their duty, as other Christians do (though this which I say, ought to be no shelter for the slothful and idle.) Which thing if many were persuaded of (as it is pity that any should doubt of) they should bear their poor estate more indifferently; and the shame that many have of it, more contentedly than now they do. For that is now their



calling to trust in God, and to hope for that relief, which shall be sufficient for them, as they did before their decay.

Furthermore, neither would I have any to think, that this which hath been spoken, doth simply deny a Christian man liberty to alter and change his calling: which although it ought not hastily nor lightly be done (seeing it is very probable, that a man may be best able to deal in that, wherein he hath been trained up and experienced) yet upon necessity and the decay of his former trade , and upon other sufficient and weighty considerations (of which sort there may fall out many) he may enjoy liberty so to do: which to set down in this place, were too far a departing from the point in hand.

And thus much be said of this matter concerning men's outward vocation: whereby among other things this may be seen, that although the most do complain that they are much hindered from a fruitful walking with God, by their earthly callings; yet that is their error, or some way their great sin: for a man fearing God may preserve faith and godliness by a wary and Christian walking in them, and practice many Christian duties in the same; as patience, and trust in God, &c. and consequently may please him therein to the great contentment of his own heart. And therefore, if any man find his calling to be a let unto him from serving God religiously, and well spending of the day, let him know, that the hindrance of him from this is in himself: even some untowardness, intemperance, and rebellion of his heart, either because he knoweth not how to use his calling aright; or else, because he hath given himself too much liberty to depart from following that which he knoweth. But otherwise, if he endeavor to encourage himself by the afore mentioned persuasions, to use it aright, he shall see every day more clearly much cause to praise God for the proof of his love to him and blessing so many ways therein (so far off shall it be from being an encumbrance unto him,

as most complain that they find it:) yea, I dare be bold to assure him, and that by the Lord's own testimony, (for to him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance) that he shall find by a conscionable discharging of duty in it, much liberty and holy boldness with God. So that, this third rule of a religious walking in our calling, reaching to so great a part of our life, though it may sometime be omitted, is (we see) much to be regarded; and other duties of equal necessity, when that must wholly or in part be intermitted, must be performed. But this is to be understood according to the helps and encouragements, that every man hath one more than another, thereafter he must be more fruitful: that none may be discouraged on the one side, when he cannot do as he would; or made slothful and negligent (when he might do much more) on the other. Thereafter (I say) ought every man both in his particular vocation, and in all other points of Christianity, bring forth more fruit: as, the Minister in respect of his calling, which is to be occupied in reading and teaching of other, and whose labor is a mean to help him forward in a godly life, because it is an acquainting of him with the Scriptures and the mind of God so properly, as cannot be said of other men's labors: the minister (I say) in such respects, oweth more duty to God (which he may also be able to perform) than the private man. So the wealthy man, in that he needeth not be careful or pensive about necessaries, (but it is his great sin if he be) hath more liberty to remember God, and to set upon duty with cheerfulness, more than the poor; who is through mere necessity constrained to his great grief, to cut off many times of reading, conference, and of public hearing (which for the most part, the other need not:) though he be not thereby discharged from fearing to offend God, &c.

And whereas men allege, that the rich is letted by reason of his wealth, and therefore cannot so easily apply himself to walk in a sound course: not what he doth, but what he ought and may do, is to

be considered. For as he shall show himself unthankful to God in gross manner, who shall thus go about to make God's blessings, stumbling blocks and hindrances from hearty love and obedience to him, and from liberty in his service more than others can have: so he shall never do it but to his great cost. In like manner they, which dwell among many good neighbors, who are as watchmen to them, and have an ordinary teaching ministry that can build them up, are to show themselves more rich and plentiful both in the exercises of religion, and in the particular duties which belong to Christians, then they can do, which want either the most, or all of the means which others enjoy.

And according to this equity, the ancient Christian, who through long experience is better acquainted with the loving kindness of the Lord, ought in better sort discharge himself of the fore-mentioned and other duties, then he who is a novice, and a young soldier in this spiritual warfare. Therefore Saint John writing to the elder Christians to put them in mind, urgeth them by the same reason, saying: I write unto you fathers, because ye have known him which is from the beginning. As if he should say: Ye have experience, that it is no labor lost to serve him: but ye having had acquaintance with the godly life, and the blessed fruit of it from your youth, ye are able upon so good and long trial, both to proceed constantly yourselves in your course, and also to hearten on the younger.

And the same I say of all others, whose part hath been greater in peace, health, freedom from diseases, in holy fellowship (especially of marriage) or in whatsoever other blessings of God: they (I say) who have enjoyed more blessings of God then other of their good brethren, ought by good right to go far before them as shining lights, both in variety of duties, and in more gracious performance of the same; and sooner return when they perceive themselves to have

wandered, and more firmly to settle themselves to hold out in their good course. And therefore it behooveth them to gain all occasions, which others neglect, to the redeeming of the time from idleness, wandering dreams of earthly happiness, and needless and filthy speech, and such other like: also to pray oftener, then at set and appointed times: to stir up their faith in the manifold and rich promises of God, taking comfort thereby usually: and while they may and while God giveth them opportunity, to refresh and do good to many by compassion, love, counsel, relief; and with all these to keep a proportion in their particular vocation, so as they may have it an help, and not a let to them: that so the Lord may say to them, Well good and faithful servants, because ye have been faithful, &c. enter into your Masters joy.

## **CHAP. 15.**

Of the declaration of the fourth rule or duty, directing us in company.

Now followeth another duty for the guiding of us in company: that is to say, when by any occasion we be in place with others, that with the same well-ordered hearts, with the which we have been taught to discharge other duties in the day, we carry ourselves in company: because it is a part of our life in the passing of the day, very diverse and distinct from that wherein we are solitary and deal with our selves. And although a man may be both in his calling and in company at once; yet, as I have showed how everyone ought to be conversant in his calling, without respect had of company: so now I show particularly, how company should be used without respect of

men's callings. Now as the companies be of many sorts with which we are occasioned to be occupied, and the matters infinite which fall out to be debated of in the same; so can there not therefore any certain and particular rules be given to direct ourselves in them: but yet some general observations may help us much; the rather, seeing they to whom I direct my speech and who may take profit by this, have attained to the hearty desire of keeping a good conscience already, and have (for a great part of them) some measure of sound knowledge of the will of God, which will greatly further them in the same.

And because all companies among men are not for and concerning traffic in earthly dealings, and matters about this present life, as bargaining's and covenants: but some are among neighbors and friends, partly for the increasing of love, and partly to make merry; and othersome by other occasions, and some by accident without any purpose thereof before: in all which kinds, we often take much hurt, and be in far worse case by them for want of good direction and heed-taking, then we were before we entered into them: First therefore I will speak of those companies, wherein we have more liberty to benefit ourselves one by another to Godward, as having no weighty dealings to hinder us: and then of the other which belong to the affairs and dealings about this present life, how to use them.

In both which generally, this is a general rule to be observed in all companies: That we fear danger, and be harmless in them and without offense, leaving no ill savor by example behind us: but more particularly, the mark which we are to aim at in all our familiar companies is this, That we should not rush unadvisedly into them as most men do, but determine before to do good in them to others as we be able, and to help them forward unto eternal life by all good

opportunities we can; or purpose to take good of others, as occasion shall be offered.

This rule (to make no doubt of the former, Mat. 18:7,8.) is according to the Scripture, that as we should draw understanding out of them, whom God hath plentifully enriched with it: so we should be moved with pity and compassion towards them, who are ignorant and careless: or though they were neither of both, yet many wants and infirmities at least they have, as we ourselves have; and therefore have need beside the preventing of other dangers, to be exhorted, stirred up, called upon and instructed; that so both they and we might be edified and built up in our most holy faith, and have our love and mutual peace confirmed betwixt us: that so our lips may feed many, and through God's goodness we may be means to turn some from going astray out of their way; and we may have also cause to thank God for the like by others, and rejoice in our Christian fellowship together. All which uses, Jonathan and David enjoyed in their meetings, the one by the other.

And to what great purpose shall it be to enjoin watchfulness over the other parts of our life, if in company we have not an especial regard of it, thereby to take all good opportunity to make our companies profitable? For daily experience teacheth how many occasions of offending God, and of troubling ourselves are offered and occasioned therein: and were we not better be absent one from another, then in such sort meet together? Besides, what an unruly member the tongue is, though it be small, the Apostle declareth when he saith: That it setteth on fire the whole body, and is itself set on fire by hell. And as for the heart which setteth it on work, who is ignorant how ready that is every way as the company shall be, to offend, either by teachiness, conceits, misconstruing; or by looseness, and lightness, and such like? And both these being well considered, how many companies

shall be found, where one is not the worse for another? Where one corrupteth not the other? Where there are not fallings out, quarrels and debate; or profane and endless talk of the world, jesting, vain and idle speech, if not filthy communication and ribaldry; or where there is not buying and selling of those which are absent? And as for lying, swearing (as Hosea speaketh) with such other abomination, it goeth through the land: and where these fail, what other speech is instead of them most commonly, but telling of tales, needless news, and such like foolish and heathenish talk, even in such as profess; which were bad enough for them which have not heard of the Gospel?

The most tolerable communication amongst the rest, which is used, is (as I have said) to be deep in and about the world and matters of commodity; wherein, as I deny not but that there is a lawful use permitted to men, sparingly, soberly, and wisely, when, and so far as there is cause: even so, as it is most commonly used, it is made well-nigh as bad as the other; that it hindereth and holdeth away all other matters profitable, and drowneth the persons over head and ears in it. Now seeing we know it is thus, should not this common and dangerous corruption, prevailing and continuing thus in most companies, cause the servants of God to bewail it, seek to stay and to hinder it; and everyone for his own part, both Pastor and people, as much as in him lieth, labor earnestly to redress it?

And therefore what is more needful about our company, then to have it ever in purpose to learn and get somewhat where we may in company: and to help forward others, which we may do any good unto, as we are able; or to make some other good use of it? That we may have testimony within ourselves, that we had made better use of our companies, then the most seek to do, or then we in times past had done our selves. And whatsoever exceptions may in probability

be brought against the performance of this duty, which after (as convenient place shall require) I will answer; yet for those who rejoice in the hope of the life to come, when they meet together, it should not be counted hard amongst them, to meet with this mind: that they might make the best use of their company in some good talk about such things as might be profitable, and for the mutual edifying of them; provoking one another thereby to greater love, as seeing and feeling causes thereof, and what decay of it there is; for so hath the Lord commanded: Exhort one another daily while it is called today.

And, if among heathen men, friendship was increased by advising one another, and by good turns done and received mutually one of another; should not Christians much more bind themselves one to another, as by other pledges of love: so by this one, that there be drawing on to duty, to grow in the knowledge of the Gospel, and to avoid the dangers which might otherwise be fallen into? That so there might be more mindfulness one of another in absence, when there was reaped so great good fruit of the one by the other in presence.

By reason of men's callings and distance of places, there is seldom meeting amongst good men: if therefore when they meet, they should not be the better one for another, they might repent for good cause, that they had lost their gain, which in that time they might have had in their calling at home: beside that, it would accuse them after their departure, that they had neglected so good opportunities, which when they would, cannot be enjoyed. I know there is cause why this should be looked unto, even amongst good people, seeing through the corruption of nature, the devil layeth stops enough in the way of the best: whereby, although he cannot bring them to the common evil course of other men, to walk in excess of riot as they do;



yet he keeps them from the good, which might be done betwixt them: as may justly be complained of, where I have acquaintance.

So that Christians whensoever they meet, either of purpose and by consent, either for neighbor-hood and (as we say) to make merry, or by any other providence of God, and yet not about traffic or earthly dealings; this mind ought always to be in them, that I have mentioned: and therefore, the one to seek to benefit and edify the other by good speech, waiting for, and taking the best occasions thereof and opportunities thereto; they beginning, who for their gifts are fit to bring on the rest; not entering beyond their skill and reach, neither the one crossing the other: but through love bearing one with another, and one helping another (for love is their greatest upholder:) and therefore either conferring of the things which they have learned, or stirring up themselves mutually to hearing of Sermons, to diligence in going forward, to inoffensive walking, and also singing of Psalms together: and if there be any occasion of reproving, exhorting, admonishing, or comforting one the other, to do it privately if the matters be private, and betwixt so many as it concerneth, in meekness of spirit and a thankful receiving of such duties: and that they that offer the same, be ready to submit themselves in humility again, to receive the words of exhortation, as they through their weakness shall give occasion.

The simplicity of the times hath been such, as men have met lovingly together in this manner, provoking one another thereunto: but it is justled out with a proud conceit of their own wisdom, who count it too base now to converse together after such a manner. But as this duty is to be mutually imparted among neighbors: so much more it ought to be in use and force in particular families, besides the ordinary worship of God in prayer and familiar instruction: where, even the servant who is the meanest member thereof, hath liberty (so

as it be in humility and wisdom) to make his complaint, as Job permitted his servants to do; that thus peace and godly unity may be maintained, and all may grow up and be edified more and more. Which duties we are not to doubt, to have been performed in the families of the noble governor Joshua, and of Cornelius a valiant Captain, so far as there was knowledge of the same amongst them, seeing it is said: That the fear of God was in those families; and such living together in one house, doth give good testimony, that God hath a little Church there indeed: but of this in another place.

But seeing there ought to be no less use of all these fruits of company betwixt the godly Pastor and his people, then amongst those whom I have mentioned: therefore let the former rules most especially be observed of them, and somewhat more; that is to say, mutual consent betwixt them, that their conference be of the things which are most fit for the estate of the persons: which, by good warrant from God, (who requireth such wisdom, labor and love) and approved experience of men, should be after this manner: That such as are ignorant, and yet willing to be taught, should be taught (question-wise) the grounds of Christian religion, and the way how to be saved, and to amend their lives. They who have knowledge hereof, should be labored with, to make use of it: namely, to be humbled by the law, comforted by faith in Christ, and to be reformed in their lives. They who are stayed in these chief matters, should be taught how to grow by the helps, and avoid all impediments: that so their life may be full of fruits and comfort. And they who have profited thus far, should have liberty given them to demand questions of their pastors for their edifying, even as to be questioned with by them for their instruction, about any particular doubts in the whole religion and true worship of God; and in confuting the contrary: or about any point touching conscience in the practice of duty. I will not say what gain the teacher himself might reap hereby, beside the poor people,

neither are many hasty to prove: but oh times! Oh days! Yea, oh people to be lamented: so happy by the long reign of thy Prince and continued peace, as thou mightest have been; and so little of this fruit to be enjoyed, or Christian duty practiced! The best thing, even the pearl and tidings of the kingdom, to lie as wares out of request, not asked after, and that through vanity and folly! These and such like, (as God hath given wisdom to both parties) should be endeavored after betwixt the pastor and people, when no other necessary things do hinder: which manner of meeting were (no doubt) like to be as a strong band to tie them in love and Christian peace together. And this I have seen, and that not in one place nor two: but I must say, as it bringeth a sweet life, so the devil layeth many blocks in the way to hinder it; that while they live stranger-like and conceited one with another, or loose, worldly and unprofitably, they may be as others be, who have no acquaintance with the Gospel. For let men think and say what they will, there is not one half of the benefit that might be enjoyed, no not of many professors themselves, by the preaching of it.

But to proceed: it is a harder thing for a man which feareth God, to have use of this rule before set down, that is, the liberty of good talk in the company, when he shall by occasion light among such as are not of his own mind; and the worser the persons be, the harder. It will be counted harsh, if not ridiculous, among such whose tongues (as they speak) are their own, to use them as they list, though the best way be taken for entering into it.

Here therefore, another consideration is to be had of us for the making of best use of the time: namely, that we wait for some fit occasion to be offered by some of the company; which (though they purpose no such thing) will from their talk arise, if we attend upon it as Paul did before Agrippa: if not, then speak we of the works,

judgments or blessings of God which are among them, or fresh in memory; by the which we may in as wise a manner as we can, utter somewhat to the holding out of evil at the least: and further it shall be expedient to like and commend that which is well spoken by them, the rather to fasten upon it, so far as it may be done without suspicion of flattery, and hurting of them. By which manner of dealing, I have oft seen the evil which began among men, and appeared; to be stayed and suppressed: and attendance given to better communication, being wisely and kindly offered.

But here, love towards them must show itself, which will make our labor seem small to us, while we seek all opportunities to win them, and whiles we are content to forgo our own pleasures and liberties in other talk, that we may do good to them. To this purpose, it were meet that when we should resort to any such company, yea or any other, we should bethink us of somewhat before; as of some good questions among them, of whom we might learn; and some other good matter fit for edifying, as the company should require, it being such as we might do any good unto: especially seeing godly communication is so seldom in place, but banished utterly from most companies. This may be thought of many, who go for good Christians, somewhat too much, to have such regard of others: but it is (indeed) slothfulness and want of love, not to seek the good of our brethren; and self-love, to seek that which pleaseth the flesh, in trifling out the time, with the neglect of the good of others and ourselves.

The which if Preachers of the Gospel especially, and other Christians would consider, I know it would be far better with the people, and much more good done in many places, then there is now for want of it, and they themselves should have no cause to repent it. And though there should be no great likelihood of any good done thereby

for the present time, yet ought we not for all that to be discouraged, forasmuch as we are commanded to use edifying talk: and we see, that good things take not always effect by and by, but afterwards in time, as the Lord seeth best, it may prevail with them; as also we may see it appear in many in some part of their life, and in others, (many times) at the day of their death: and yet if no good should be done is it not to be liked that evil is removed?

But if men which fear God, be not resolved to seek such profitable and Christian uses of their meetings, in some sort when they may be enjoyed: I would wish them to think, that it shall be better for them to attend upon their family and their affairs and charge at home, rather than frequent company much abroad, seeing in much common talk there is much sin, and for idle words men shall give an account. I grant that neighborhood and love amongst Christian men, is nourished by meetings; as, feastings together, and such like: but these are not hindered but much helped, whiles our tables, after we are refreshed and have showed tokens of love therein, be seasoned with good communication, and a careful regard had to keep out that which is evil and needless: and if there be any to whom this is unwelcome, who perhaps will not be thus directed in the use of company-keeping, let him set down a better, and I shall be well pleased in his refusing of this advice and direction, and with all my heart learn of him.

And as for them which object: that they have not been acquainted with such communication when they meet, and therefore look not after it; they should rather blush at their ignorance, and want of experience in so manifest a duty: for our talk should be to the edifying of the company: and all ought to follow their teachers in it, who are commanded to be examples to their flock in the same: Be an example in communication. Neither let any please themselves in this,

that they will not look after such preciseness: It were more to be commended and better to be liked, if they had said, They were sorry, that they had not their benefit in such a sweet liberty, as God hath vouchsafed us. It was the speech of a learned godly man: I never depart out of company, where I have wholly omitted good speech having opportunity, but I am checked and accused.

But to go a little further: if it shall fall out that we be to our grief in company, as beset with scornful, profane and brutish persons, so that we see no opportunity nor place for any good, it shall be our wisdom to keep ourselves from having any fellowship with their unfruitful works of darkness; using Samson's wisdom (when we fear any such thing) by savory riddles or such like, to break them off, and to give apparent tokens of our dislike if we can go no further to the suppressing of it; fearing otherwise, lest while we are silent when God should be honored, the stones in the street should speak: yet let all be done wisely and peaceably, and regard had how and when to speak. And this is to be done until we can conveniently depart from them, and be careful after, that we fall not into the like company again: For so doth Solomon counsel, Prov. 14:7. Depart from the company of a foolish man, when thou seest not in him the words of wisdom. I speak of such company as one spake of Rome: If he go thither, at the first time he shall see an ill man: if he like so well that he go the second time, he shall know him: but if he will needs go the third time, he will surely bring him home with him.

But in other companies we must be careful (as hath been showed us) that we banish evil, and endeavor after some good, both for our own benefit and other men's; as it shall be the discharge of a good part of our duty (who are commanded that our talk should be gracious and powdered with salt:) so it promiseth great blessing to all such as are careful in looking to the same; as they have seen, who for these

twenty or thirty years have had experience, that it hath profited them greatly who have carefully used it, in comparison of those who have not regarded it: so that not only the first beginners in the practice of Christianity, have been well stirred up to care and conscience, and have learned many good points of Christian religion and duty by it; but even they of longer continuance in Christ's school, have been much comforted and perfected by using all opportunities this way for their edifying.

It may be a shame for us in the going about a duty which hath great promise of blessing, to be slacker than Heretics, Papists and Sectaries are in that which is but the device of their own brain; who by oft talking of their religion and opinions, have drawn many into their errors.

As for those who object against it, that it is more than needeth, and they see not that men are tied to it, and they meet to be merry: I say to the first part of the objection, that they who like it not in friendly and familiar meetings, but think it more than needeth, must needs look little after it amongst strangers and ill-willers to goodness; where it will be so much the more unwillingly gone about, because they know not how the company is affected: and so amongst such as bring this objection there shall never be time for it, nor use of it; but the words of the Apostle shall lie dead: That our communication should minister grace to the hearers. For answering the second part of their objection, I have proved as much out of other Scripture: so that none should account that an embondaging and tying of him which God requireth, whose service is perfect freedom; and let them look who have a commandment from God to use it, what defense they have by the corrupt example of men which neglect it, for their so doing.

For the last point of their coming to be merry, I answer: that if they be merry in honest and seemly mirth, they will not be against good communication, which seasoneth their lawful mirth that it may not pass bounds: and let them suspect, that it savoreth too much of the flesh, which they account honest mirth, if for it, the other become irksome unto them: neither do I seek to deprive men of the one, neither above that they are able, to tie them only or always to the other; but to endeavor to make best use of our company, because it is with us in this one duty as in the rest, that he which cometh most forward in it, is yet much behind: and yet this I would say further of their merry talk; though communication of things lawful and indifferent, be to be allowed, yet I would (if I might) choose, (when there is liberty for both alike) always to prefer that which is holy, and to edifying.

And (to conclude) so I would be taken, in that which I have uttered concerning this matter, that how meet and profitable soever I affirm this communing of good things in company to be; yet if we light upon such, who have some liking of the truth, and yet have not felt such savor in it, nor found such fruit by it, but that they count it an overcharging, and too sore a pressing of them, to be much holden to it; I say, we lighting upon such, ought to have regard of their weakness, and to bring them on as we see they may in best sort be prevailed with: and let this be well regarded of us, for it is far from me to beat any such thing into their heads, as to make them think, that our religion alloweth no talk but of the Scriptures; when both it alloweth, and we deny not, but (anything which hath been said notwithstanding) that the learned may have their talk of learning, the magistrates of governing, and the common people of their sciences and trades, how they may come to more skill and attain to further perfection in them, or of any other lawful things to a good end.



But this is to be observed generally, that in all these kinds of meetings, whatsoever the persons be, we leave no ill example among them, which as an ill savor, may cast such a rank smell in the company that it procure as well shame and sorrow to us, as hurt and offense to those which are present, and reproach to their profession, as also an emboldening of the bad to be worse. And thus much for the use of our company in the which we have no necessary dealings about the things of this life. To the which I will add the duties of our reproving, exhorting and comforting one another, seeing these are religious actions practiced in company, though there be but two that meet together. And first for reproving or admonishing of a Christian, who hath given offense and justly deserveth to be rebuked: we must be sure that the fault is committed by him, and not charge him upon bare report, much less for that which is no sin (though in our conceit it be so) but a thing indifferent: and we must beware that we be not justly to be charged with the like offense; for then we take away the grace and force of our reprehension, unless it be known that we do warily decline such sins ourselves: and with a mind to reclaim him and turn him from his sin in love though it prick, seeing the wounds of a lover are faithful, and he that telleth the truth shall find more favor at length then he that flattereth: and for a private offense, privately; though if it be open and well known, it maybe in the company of many and more sharply, as the offense is greater and the person, one that may be more offensive, as a minister; always laboring that it may appear, that God findeth the fault and reproveth, and not we who are but his instruments to do his will. But this age hath most boldly, yea scornfully despised this ordinance of God: which troubleth the consciences of many good Christians; so that when God commandeth it so straightly on the one side, and men reject it so insolently and resolutely (that I speak no further) on the other side, they cannot tell what to do betwixt both.

And as for exhortation, which is a stirring up of them to proceed in the ways of the Lord, as Barnabas did the people in the book of the Acts; and as Paul doth oft require it to be used among Christians: so doubtless he that laboreth in such a work, doth discharge an excellent duty. But he must be a man so free from worldly incumbrances, and so looking to the necessity of the performing of it, (through the coldness that is in men) and to the good that cometh by it, that he may stir up this gift in himself, whosoever he be, that hath any such; and not be dismayed, if success follow not by and by, as he would wish. I have seen much good done by it, even in the mouth of private men. And if it were kindly used of Christians, as they shall have occasion, and much more by the Minister, there would much good blessing follow it: but if men take not heed, the Devil doth so craftily hinder it, that it will take small effect, but rather be frustrate and broken off. That will be, if he who should be occupied in this service to God, be a loose liver himself, he shall do no good by it to others; and he shall soon wax weary of it: and especially if he be not very watchful in his earthly dealings, that there grow no conceits, strangenesses and other dislikes by means of them, betwixt him and others: for they will soon hinder it.

But here I cannot omit to bewail the unseasonable speeches of some, as also uncharitable, and discouraging: that (as though they saw no use of these duties, namely of exhorting, admonishing and reproof; nor of the Apostles commanding, that they should be continued) ask: What Papists any convert from their popery hereby: whereas it is well known, that the common sort of them admit small talk about religion, their common answer being this, They mean not to reason; except the learned sort of them, who of a willful and malicious mind against religion and Prince maintaining it, do of set purpose abuse their gifts to the perverting of the truth. But God be thanked, this charge of exhorting and rebuking one another, was given before

popery was hatched: and there should have been need enough of it, though it had never been bred, and so it shall be a Christian duty much pleasing the Lord (without any regard of them who scorn it) wheresoever it be wisely and religiously used: and (without controversy) much blessed; this being regarded of them towards whom it is used, which is written: I beseech you brethren suffer the words of exhortation.

For consolation also and ministering comfort, it is another worthy duty: when in men's bodily sickness or trouble of mind, or otherwise in their wants, we do ease their sorrowful hearts, with sweet words from God, wisely and fitly applied to them, and comfort them as he hath comforted us. When a penitent soul counting that his greatest misery, which is a token of his greatest happiness, (I mean the feeling of the burden of his sin, desiring nothing more than to be eased) shall be brought to be persuaded so, and that his sin is forgiven him, what can be like comfortable to him? For he shall be one of a thousand to him that can do it, as we read in Job. So when another in case of bodily distress or necessity, shall in like sort be spoken to, as the woman of Canaan was by our Savior, saying: O woman great is thy faith, be it to thee as thou desirest; what a reviving of her was it (think we?) Not much unlike to the dealing of Boaz with Ruth, a desolate and poor widow, and a stranger; which caused her to break forth and say: O my Lord, thou hast comforted me, and spoken to the heart of thine handmaid. For if the diseased person be much cheered by Physic bodily, what marvel though spiritual comfort work upon the soul mightily? It should be in request therefore, above all other private matters, even as it is the weightiest: that there should be not Ministers only, (who yet chiefly should do it) but even private Christians also, who should be able in some measure to comfort one another in their heaviness: but this also is to seek with men. Not one of many can speak to the purpose

to a sick body to comfort him, but unsavorily, that which may more increase his heaviness, by telling him they are much grieved for his sickness, &c. when (who seeth not?) they had need of other comfort.

As for other companies, they are of another kind: some about honest refreshing's, some about bargaining's, covenants-making, and other agreements; and some about suites, debates, controversies, and such like: and although there cannot certain rules be given concerning them all; yet they must be all gone about and done in such wise, as that they may be suitable and correspondent to the other parts of Christian life, that there be no breaking off our comfort with God by loose and careless doing of them, but that we hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: neither that there be a following of the fashion of other men in them, but that we being armed with such grace as is fit for those occasions, may show, that we are attired with the furniture of Christians, which we ought continually (as with seemly apparel) to be clothed with, to make our whole conversation comely.

For example: to speak of Christian recreation, wherein a part of company keeping is taken up for the most part, which is an exercise not separate from godliness, of something that is indifferent for the necessary refreshing of the mind or body, or both: who doubteth, but that God hath taught his servants how to use it; although others will never come under any rule or government? For they who will not be subject in other parts of their lives to God's commandments, much less will be controlled or directed by them in this: wherein they imagine they have free liberty to use it as they list. Such therefore as do claim the benefit of it, must be as careful to use it aright as to look to enjoy the liberty of it, not as they who if they once get this by the end, That it is lawful, never inquire further of the lawful manner of using it. The time when it may be used, is not when we list, but when

we have need of it through weariness and other unfitness: for to that end the Lord appointed such intermission for us. And though some desire it not greatly to drive away from themselves annoyances of mind or body thereby; yet to othersome it is not to be denied in either of both those respects, they being careful to use it; as God doth allow: and in going about it, because through the corruption of our hearts we become easily unsettled by such actions, it shall be very expedient to strengthen ourselves by some looking up to God in our use thereof, that we may take no hurt to our souls whiles we refresh ourselves; seeing all the creatures of God are good, to the faithful user of them, if they be received with prayer and thanks by which they are sanctified: and he who counteth it too harsh and sad a matter to desire grace of God to use it aright, may well fear that he shall offend in it.

For the kind of our recreation: it must be honest and of good report, that so we give occasion to none by our liberties taking so unseasonably, to embolden others against conscience. The manner should be in moderation of our affections in it; as anger, choler, contention, strife, coveting that which is our neighbors, and such like: and in moderation of the time, how long we continue it, remembering that it is a refreshing *tanquam somno caterisque quietibus*, as he saith; that is, as a man that is wearied, doth desire rest, and to give himself to sleep that he may be refreshed by it: and it must not be an overlaying of ourselves, or a toil unto us, or wearying of us, so that necessary duties of the day be omitted by it; neither get such an interest in us, that we cannot leave it when we should.

Our companions therein should not be men of evil name for corrupt life and notorious offenses, but such as be ready to hear of it if they be overshot. Our end: to be the fitter to the duties of our calling, not

covetous contrary to the tenth commandment, nor seek our gain thereby, nor to increase our liking of such passing of our time, and so to draw us after the same oftener then might seem expedient for us, or from one kind to another, spending out our precious time therein as though we were to yield no account of it; that we may not be servants to our lusts. And as this may somewhat direct us in companies where we meet to refresh ourselves; so he that is not willing thus to use recreation, shall wish in time, that he had never been acquainted with it: besides that, it is not said in vain: He that loveth pastime shall be a poor man.

Now for other companies in which we meet about our earthly affairs, God hath taught us virtues fit to uphold and carry us through them, as all other parts of our life, in peace and in good sort: whereas without them, full dangerous hurts might easily take hold of us therein, by such means as we little suspect. Therefore to speak particularly of our bargaining's and other covenants, they ought to be without hollowness, deceit, undermining and such other unconscionable dealing; that so we may be simple and our meaning good, our words plain, our agreements reasonable, our promises kept, our covenants performed, except consent on both sides to the contrary: but where the advantage should fall out against the poor and needy, there mercy and compassion would be required.

In suites and controversies great charity is to be showed; and in this to be showed, namely; that although no compromise can be made (which if it may with any indifferency be obtained, is in no wise to be neglected:) yet that the question or case betwixt us about words, goods, or other matters, may not turn us from the pursuing of the thing to the persons, nor to break off our Christian love, howsoever we receive hatred and deadly malice for our good meaning.

Strong patience also must be labored for to bear the cost, the travel, the toil and tarriance, with all other griefs and molestations, which fall out thereby, or may possibly be offered us, until we see the end and issue. But especially if it should stand with the answering for ourselves in accusations of any crime before the magistrate: with this patience, would wisdom and Christian courage with modesty and meekness be necessarily adjoined. And by the help of these the Lord hath brought to pass, that the frowning looks, and cruel faces of tyrants and persecutors have not been feared, their bloody threats have not daunted the people of God, much less have they turned them from their most holy faith and profession; but they themselves who have vexed them, have appeared to be more tormented in their conscience at the beholding of the graces of God in them, then they who have been bodily tormented by them. And this for the use of company be said, as in such brevity I could: which advice and direction the reader must receive in all companies one day as another to guide him therein.

And to shut up this fourth duty, let this be added: that not only in our companies we be harmless and give good example; but every way and in all our dealings with men, whether they be privy to it or no, innocent and just to all, and merciful and pitiful to the needy and oppressed: and the rather, for that we are so naturally given to regard and seek our own profit, whosoever sustain loss thereby; and therefore to be always thus resolved, that rather than any should have just occasion to complain of our injury or hard dealing, we are ready to depart from some piece of our own right, as Abraham did to Lot. And because it is most men's calling, every of the six days to have dealings with some other, therefore let the true Christian arm himself with this mind, even thus to live and converse with them in all that they have to do with them: for many of them are so deceitful and unconscionable, that they will abuse the most innocent and

honest Christians with slanderous tongues and false reports, if they cannot get what they would at their hands. Now what would such do, if they had any just cause given them to open their mouths? But besides, even honest men, if they deal together, either for that they do not plainly set down their minds; or if they do, yet one sustaineth the loss in the end, when both look to gain: I cannot tell how it cometh to pass, that there arise hard thoughts betwixt them, that love is broken off, or so cooled, as the devil hath apparently showed, that the persons wanted care and wisdom: therefore such should so look to their actions, that they may have no such accusations come against them at even or in the judgment day, nor provoke the Lord to measure out to them after the same manner again, which they may be most sure of.

Yet one thing remaineth, which most fitly is here to be placed: that seeing we shall in having company, fellowship and affairs with sundry men, behold many gracious examples among the rest, as worthy patterns of godliness, that we be diligent to mark and learn, and follow whatsoever in them may better adorn and furnish us, as the Apostle taught: Be ye followers of me, as I follow Christ: and that we carry not that high opinion of ourselves, as that we stand in no such need of others because we have somewhat more than the common sort of the world, but in humility and meekness make that reverent account of God's gifts in others, rather than envy and disdain them, that we may with all speed seek to enjoy the same ourselves: and much more to follow the good examples of such as are commended to us in the Scriptures; as Abraham the father of the believers in faith, Moses in meekness, Joseph in chastity, David in the love of God's worships and holy exercises, Caleb in constant following of the Lord to the end, &c. This the holy Ghost exhorteth us to, in the Epistle to the Hebrews: Follow the faith and conversation of such, and consider what hath been the end thereof. A necessary



watchword for numbers in this age, so degenerated from the godly course of the reverend Ancient that were before them, that they have not only not known the God of their fathers, but also disgraced that zealous serving of God which they used.

The examples of such therefore as I set down before, shall be no small help, being oft before us, to chase away from us frivolous and hurtful fantasies, faintness, discouragements and weariness of well doing; and cause that the multitude of contrary examples shall not hurt us by their pride, boldness and licentious life; and to join us fast to Jesus Christ though not now seen of us; and that we may hold the profession of our faith with joy unto our end.

## **CHAP. 16.**

Of the declaration of the fifth duty, how we should behave ourselves  
in solitariness.

Now I will pass to the next duty: which is, to guide and teach us how to carry ourselves and pass the time, when we are out of company, solitary by ourselves alone. And this it is, that seeing a great part of the day many times is passed, when neither our callings are in hand, neither we occupied in any company; we must have the same especial care over our hearts and behavior when we are alone, that we were taught before to have in company. And as we are counseled by the Prophet, that if we desire to reform our ways, and so to live blessedly, we must take diligent heed to them all, one as well as another, as God's word directeth us: so this being one part of our ways every day, (for the most part) to govern ourselves Christianly at all times when we are by ourselves alone, we must have a special regard and care of the same.

For who is able to reckon up all or the most part of the occasions, whereby we are moved and provoked to offend and let loose our hearts to sin, when we are alone, and how infinite kinds of evil we may be brought unto at such times, when there is none present by fear or shame to hold us from them? Nay I say more, the most iniquities which are done in the sight of the world, were first invented and purposed only in the sight of God; and the sins which openly are committed, have been in warping and working secretly before: which the Prophet did plainly express, when in bewailing his sin which was come into the eyes of men, he said thus: Against thee only (O Lord) have I sinned: as if he should have said, I offended thee secretly by ungodly desire, before I proceeded in the sight of men to give offense.

And so saith another Scripture, that David walked on the roof of his house, and saw from thence a woman, &c. And to show more fully, that it is a fit time for the Devil to occupy our heads in sundry kinds of evil when we are alone, it is noted that our grand-mother Eve was set upon by Satan when she was alone, her husband not being with her. And our Savior was assaulted by him, when he was in the wilderness out of the company of men; with many other such sayings. Which I allege not as though I were of opinion, that there is no danger to be feared in company, (I have before said the contrary) but to show that there is many ways sore danger of falling when we are alone (and so we the more naked to resist:) which was the thing that I intended to prove, which our woeful experience (I am full sure) confirmeth; who are no sooner from company, alone, but swarms of vain, foolish, and (if they be not chased away) of noisome and perilous thoughts and desires (as a swarm of Bees about a man's ears) are soliciting and offering themselves unto us.

Now then seeing the case so standeth, who doth not see, what need there is of some good help to keep our souls from annoyance at such times? And not only so, but also to stir up ourselves unto the doing of such duties, as we shall see to concern us most: that so we may make this solitary part of our life (which is not small) to be suitable and correspondent unto the rest.

And for some plain and certain direction herein, we may consider the things which we are occupied about in solitariness. Now we know that all matters which go through our hands or heads while we are out of company, are either simply holy, or unholy, or things indifferent: now our own necessity, and Christian wisdom will teach about which of all these we have most cause to be occupied; and let us not be slack and negligent to mark and observe that, but let our circumspect care and watchfulness (which must always accompany us) ever foresee that: for without it, we shall do nothing well. And therefore if in journeying, walking, sitting still, or lying in our beds, &c. we shall remember, that we are held down with any sin or infirmity, let us muse upon the occasion of it, upon the vileness, shame and danger of it, how hard it is to renounce it, how God is provoked thereby, and therefore how to be abased under it; and so in confidence crave pardon of it, and grace to weaken it. If we have need and cause to take order for some earthly business, which otherwise will turn us to great trouble, let us with good advice think with ourselves how to dispose of it to our peace. If neither of both these give us occasion to be occupied, then let us watch such good opportunity of being alone to make benefit of the time, by setting ourselves to muse upon some holy things, (as the love of God, our mortality, &c.) or enjoy the liberty of talking with our God by prayer, thanksgiving, reading, rejoicing in him, &c. or, if we have any other necessary duty to be done, (as we shall be able when we be from our calling) let that be gone about. And if it be objected, that it is a hard

matter thus to do: I must needs say, it will be hard to have our hearts thus at commandment when we are by ourselves, especially for such as cannot read; but yet let us consider again, that we cannot be better occupied: what did I say? Better? Nay we can hardly be otherwise occupied without sin. And this advice for the redeeming of the time when we are alone, as long as it is the counsel of the Lord that we should thus gain it from evil, I am not moved what they say against it, who neither use their solitariness thus, but as though thought were free, give their hearts liberty to rove and range anywhere. Sure I am, we cannot be too provident and careful that way: and the best follow this rule sloughy enough, by reason of the untowardness which remaineth in them, and the infinite occasions which do provoke them: and yet the fruit will answer the labor that shall be bestowed. For if we shall with this vigilancy hold in our corrupt hearts, and hunt out, and scare away the assaults of the Devil on every side, as by the wisdom which God hath given us we shall be able to do; we shall never suffer them to carry us forth in any ill course or way; but instead thereof, procure great liberty and freedom from such servitude.

Yea, if we will be thus circumspect and watchful in this time of our solitariness, (wherein we are otherwise in great danger to fall many ways, as hath been said) we shall come the better furnished into company after, to behave ourselves therein as becometh us: yea if we will be watchful, I say, against the froth and draff of our hearts, to expel and hold out idleness, vanity of mind, evil desires, and wandering lusts, &c. it is incredible what advantage it will bring us: no less, (I dare boldly affirm) then that hundredth fold spoken of in the Gospel for one; that is, that whosoever forsaketh ought for Christ's sake, (it being that, which he cannot allow) shall receive even here an hundredth times more contentation, peace and comfort, then he should have had by following his will and desire therein, &c.

And whatsoever strangeness and absurdity any men shall think this to be, to have such an eye to ourselves, that our well-ordered course be not broken off, in the time when we shall be alone, (by setting ourselves about things holy, or disposing of things lawful, or watching carefully against those which are evil; and that we may not be at our own choice to do or desire what we list and think good, without this strict tying of us to some certainty) they which will not be contentious, I trust shall easily be answered. To whom, this I say for answer, (much like as I said to them who thought it too hard) and let it be well weighed: that there is no time wherein we shall be alone, in which one of these three shall not be necessary, or wherein any other thing besides almost, shall be tolerable or allowable. For what time of our solitariness can there be, wherein we shall not have some lawful thing and that which is indifferent to think of about our family, our crosses or other business, and to prevent dangers imminent, to remove or ease troubles present, or some other such way to dispose of matters for our peace, and for the good of others? Or wherein we shall not have cause to bewail some infirmity which oppresseth us; or to cast with ourselves, what an heap and dung-hill of corruption is lodged within us, and complain of it, and to see and know it better? Or wherein we shall not have just cause to break out into the praises of God, or some such like passing the time about some holy matters (as hath been said) whereof there is so great variety and store? I speak to those which have understanding to judge discreetly, and to whom nothing that I say, should be harsh or unsavory; as having received from God a wise and understanding heart to discern, and a promise of strength, and therefore sufficient encouragement to do his will in this part of their life readily and gladly, rather than to desire with earthly minded persons to range after noisome and unlawful liberties.

Indeed I do not deny, but that as we carry flesh about us, which is a burden to weigh us down, so we shall never discharge this duty, nor so purely follow this direction for the well taking up the time when we be alone, as were to be wished: but yet for all that, we must learn and endeavor to follow the rules which are given us, and that daily better and better, and not to suffer ourselves to pass such times securely and without regard, or full purposing of well bestowing the same as we are directed, although we shall not attain fully to that which we would. For if this be intended of us faithfully, as everyone is enabled of God, we shall not need to repent us of the time so passed: but we may have peace in that which we go about.

And what shall we aim at in laboring to be thus directed, more than the dear servant of God David did, who as he prayed God that the words of his mouth might be always acceptable in his sight in what company soever he should come: so did he likewise, that the meditations of his heart might please him, wheresoever he should become. And so in another Psalm he testifieth what his practice was: namely, that he did hide his word within his heart, that he might not at any time either in company or alone sin against him. And let all know, that it cometh from a most dangerous custom of giving their hearts liberty, (when they are by themselves alone) that they range after what fancies and folly they list in company, and that they are so untoward and unwilling to betake themselves to better uses. And such must do as they, who in eating and drinking have stuffed themselves so full, as that they are provoked to vomit. And most lamentable it is, that after so long enjoining of the Gospel, there is so little acquaintance with, or government over the manifold disorders and unruliness of the heart, when God hath given us understanding hearts, to look after and think upon things which are excellent. But this complaint is made in another place.

That which remaineth to be said of this point (using our solitariness aright) is, that as I have set down the rules by which we ought to be guided herein: so I give a short caveat, or watch-word about the same. As first, whereas I have said, that when we be free from the works of our calling, and out of company, after we have entered into the affairs of the day, one use of our solitariness is, that we may deal about things lawful, and bethink us how we may best dispose them. Many things are to be considered, about this for the avoiding of danger: as, that we beat not our brains to search curiously into others to judge and censure them, neither busy ourselves in their matters needlessly, as Paul speaketh of women; that is, further forth, then we are called thereto, and so may become helpful to them: which thing whiles many neglect, they spend much time in thinking of those matters which do nothing appertain to them; and in the meanwhile, make themselves the unfitter for their own necessary duties.

Furthermore, we must take heed, that while we deal in our own matters, we drown not ourselves in the cogitation of earthly things over long, that is, further then need is, and so we begin to take sweetness, and feel our hearts brought in love with the creature and the commodities of this life; and thereby to have our love weakened towards the Creator. For this is not Christian wisdom (though it be the wisdom of the world) to increase our love toward the things of the world; but by all means possible to diminish it, and so the less to set by them.

Again, whereas another use of our solitariness is, that we should bend our minds to holy and heavenly things when we are alone; this is a special caution herein, that we do not for all our oft recourse to this duty, go about them with the less reverence, whether we go to prayer, or set ourselves to reading, or enter into any meditation. The which admonition I know to be very needful, for that I see many to

set less by and lightlier to esteem the most holy exercises of piety, even for the commonness of them: who yet, when they first enjoyed them, could never sufficiently commend, esteem, or have their full of them. For as our Savior Christ saith of John the Baptist: John was a burning light, and for a season ye delighted in him; and as the Galatians ran well for a time, but were letted: so I may say of this, that diverse for a while take pleasure in the use of private helps to godliness; but they are soon broken off, their hot zeal is quickly cooled. And this (if they were well rooted in the beginning) is, for that they do not daily nourish the estimation and love of them, nor see daily the necessity of them: but many days suffer them to be omitted, which they would not do, if they did not begin to be glutted with them. Therefore resolve thyself of this, that thou hast daily need of such holy exercises, and to have some time in the day by thyself alone to call thine affections home from wandering in the world, and to have thy secret and sweet talk betwixt God and thy soul; that thou mayest thereby unburthen thyself of the load of worldly cares and desires, which by too earnest dealings have grown upon thee. And what day doth pass, wherein thou hast not as great need, as thou hast had upon any other, of meditating upon God's unchangeable love to thee, of the continual and daily benefit of Christ's death to heal the sore of thy soul through sin? What day goeth over thy head, in which thou hast not need to confess thy sins, to see them better, and to bethink thyself how thou mightest grow more constant in godliness?

Another thing to be taken heed of here, is: that thou think not overwell of thyself, for that thou shalt do somewhat more in the service of God, then others; and for that cause look to be borne with in some of thy faults. We are herein too like Peter, (though in other parts of godly fervency we come short in following him) that whiles we look to one thing, what grace we have received, we half triumph before the victory; little or nothing marking how many good things we are



without: when (yet) the Apostle ceaseth not in his own example to teach us, that we should forget the things which are behind us, (that we should not be fleshed and made anything the more slow and careless by them) but we should look to the things which are before us, and which yet remain to be done of us, and be carried to the mark, even to the reward of our heavenly calling. Phil. 3:14.

Finally, for the use of solitariness in renouncing things unlawful, thou art to beware, if at any time when thou art alone thou enterest into the consideration of the manifold sins which reign in the world, and some of them such as do sometime much snare and take hold of thee, that thou be not secretly allured and drawn to like of some of them, whiles thou goest about to refrain and wane thyself from them by musing on them. For the devil can change himself into an Angel of light, and cause that to seem the greatest pleasure unto thee, which is rank poison; nay, (which is more) when thou goest about to disgrace it to thyself, even then to be brought to like and be snared with it. And as Saint Paul hath given charge to Timothy, and in him to all true ministers of the Gospel, that when they should execute this one part of their ministry, namely, to exhort young women, (which was a good thing) they should beware they mixed it not with evil, by unchaste thoughts arising in their hearts; and therefore he saith, Exhort the younger women with all pureness and chaste minds: so I say, in thy solitary musings of thy sins (which is also a good thing) let the like regard be had: that is to say, that whiles thou intendest to grow further out of love with them, the devil tickle thee not with new desire of them, or some other. For thou art blind through thine own self-love and corruption: but especially when the devil goeth about any such matter, he will blindfold thee more strongly, that thou shalt see that which liketh thee, in sin; but not that which will slay thee: and the strength of thine affections, being set on fire by a deep impression of that which they like, will more forcibly hale thee

forward, then a bare weak desire to avoid the sin, shall be able to hold thee back. And if thou believest not this, thou hast (I dare warrant thee) found it so already; and howsoever thou thinkest that thou hatest sin, thou shalt be drawn unto it again, until thou perceivest that thou art wounded, unless (which is worse) thou be hardened.

To this end remember, how Judah going forth about a lawful and honest thing, namely: to see his sheepshearers, intending no evil; yet because he went not armed, he defiled himself by the way with a harlot. To the like end many more examples may be brought. And hereof it is (to illustrate that which I say, by an instance or example) that sometime such as have lived in malice with their adversary, do (upon better consideration) purpose to agree with him, and pray, that they may no longer bear hatred: but even then (a thing worthy to be marked) the manifold injuries, unkindness's and indignities are so amplified by the devil, which their corrupt heart also liketh full well to aggravate, that they rather depart after their prayer with triumphing over their adversary, then over their sin; and being strongly incensed against him, they be very slaves to their sin. So have many Christians of good hope, oft times by themselves reasoned and debated in their hearts, how they have been hailed and drawn to unclean desires, till they have been checked for their sin, misliked it, and accused themselves for it, &c. and yet at the same time, (so covertly Satan worketh) or at the least soon after, have either set forward and revived such unruly desires, or (which is worse) have nourished them and so run further. So I may say of all other iniquities that which I have said of these, that while they purpose alone by themselves to think how shameful and odious their sin is: yet for want of good experience and due consideration, they suspecting no such danger as the devil intendeth against them, he sendeth them away many times either as ill armed to resist it as they

were before; or else so handleth the matter, that they grow to a further liking and entertaining of it.

And is it any marvel? For when they are thus over-matched by Satan, (that while they go about to think of the renouncing of their sin, they are brought contrarily to like of it) this disadvantageh them sore much more, and holdeth them more strongly in fear and persuasion that they shall still live in bondage and subjection to it, then if they had never at all gone about to resist it: as he who maketh a fray, when he hath proved the strength of his enemy, and hath felt and perceived his own weakness to be far greater then he looked for, is much discouraged from attempting the like another time. And many of these sleights are in our common adversary the devil, which diverse true hearted (yet inexperienced) Christians not knowing nor being acquainted with, are much astonished when they first prove it to be so, and are discouraged for long time after when they see what hard success they have had. And it must teach us all to come better armed then that we should think, with a bare desire to overcome our sin, or in having only a cold dislike of it: these weapons fray not so mighty and subtle an enemy. But we will take no knowledge of it, and that we have need to walk in fear always: and therefore we must of necessity smart, for that we would not be warned, till we say as many have said: Oh that we had been wiser. Therefore both at such times when we enter by ourselves into the consideration of our sin, to the end we may grow further out of liking with it, and at all other times let us endeavor to follow that which hath been said concerning this point, namely: that we deal wisely in our own behalf, as by the former cautions we have been advised.

Thus in some sort I have showed how we should look to ourselves when we are alone, and how we should be occupied in that time of the day wherein we are free from the works of our calling and from

company, that is to say: In keeping ourselves from idleness and vain wanderings, and if it may be in doing some good, at leastwise ready and prepared thereto, that we may always even alone as in company suspect ourselves, and pass our time in fear, and be mindful of Satan's enterprises. Also such caveats or cautions as I have thought needful, I have added, whether we be occupied about things lawful, or things which are holy in our solitariness, or in avoiding things which are evil: and if for all that which I have said of directing us to the well spending of the time alone, it shall not be able to persuade some, I think it the best way to shame them with the examples of the heathen Philosophers, and to send them to learn of them, who refuse to be taught of the Scriptures. And amongst the rest Marcus Tullius Cicero may be one, who although he knew not Christ nor his doctrine, yet he had such a continual love to learning and virtue, that as his writings do testify how he was occupied in the eyes of others; so this one of his sayings showeth, how he passed his time alone: I being weary (saith he) of living amongst wicked men, with whom all places in a manner do swarm, I betake myself unto solitariness, as much as I can; yet that none may think me to trifle out my time idly, (that I say no more) let my books (which were many volumes) speak, how in my solitariness I have been occupied.

But let us hear another which was before Tully, whose example is recorded of him, and of that wise man Cato, expressed in his own words, thus: Publius Scipio African, the first of that name, was wont to say, That he was never less idle or unoccupied, then when he was free from business; and that he was never less solitary, then when he was alone. Which speech manifestly declareth, that he did use to think of weighty matters, when he had laid the doing of them aside for a season; and that he was wont to commune with himself, when he was alone.

So that, neither he was idle at any time, and yet that he had no need of company to find him occupied. And whereas most men cannot tell what to do when they have not some work to set themselves about, but become utterly idle, except their heads be running after some evil; he was both profitably exercised, and the better quickened and sharpened by such intermission to return to public affairs and business again. Therefore (as hath been said) he by the keeping of his mind occupied, and by searching out those things which by musing and contemplation he attained unto, was never either alone or unoccupied. This was reported of Scipio a Heathen, who could occupy himself in no better things then momentary and earthly; as moral virtues, government of commonwealths, and the searching out of natural causes of things: which all are done by man's reason.

But O woeful people we, that the like cannot be said or truly reported of us who have such variety of heavenly things concerning the immortality of our souls, the glorious rising again of our bodies, and the incomprehensible and everlasting happiness, which God hath bequeathed and freely bestowed upon us to be enjoyed of us, some here and some hereafter in the world to come, and yet we are soon glutted with them! That in our solitary refreshing's and recreations of our minds, we can seldom look up above that which we may see with our eyes; as though such heavenly matters had no savor with us, but were wearisome and tedious! This Scipio, when he had been much taken up in civil affairs and dealings amongst men, could with pleasure and delight think by himself alone of things profitable, of wisdom, learning, civil government in war and peace, &c.

But we, if we have taken a little pain in company, we give our minds the bridle in our intermission and solitariness, to think of that only almost which they desire: and as for serious matters we blush not to say, We will not meddle with them, but lay them aside: whereas who

doubteth but that (the end of all our knowledge being Use and practice to keep our hearts in an heavenly manner subject to our God from time to time) we have far greater need of meditation and keeping of our minds in frame, then this Scipio, or such like in their kind. How rare are those men, and yet ridiculous for their labor, who acquaint themselves with this meditating of the law of God, and of the infinite variety of holy things therein, although the man of God, whose praise is so great in the Scripture, could make it his work both in the day and the night season?

And therefore seeing I can no otherwise help to redress this wretched custom of neglecting this benefit and liberty of oft meditating, and profitable using of solitariness in them, who might well use it: I will say no more but pray for such as know not by experience how good and gainful it is, instead of all idle and vain wanderings and fantasies, wherewith they swarm for the most part when they are alone.

And I will not cease to bewail the unhappiness of the men of our days, who in the usual and daily trifling out of their precious time, declare that they are ignorant of their best portion, which is, to have daily communion with God; but are wise to deceive themselves in forgoing it for folly and sin. And therefore it is no marvel, though of many wise and learned, yet there are so few, which both find an heavenly sweetness in their own lives, and are fit to season others therewith, because they are not oft and usual daily with the Lord in their soliloquies, that is, in their communing betwixt God and themselves in their prayer and meditation; and in having recourse to him, sequestered from the company of men, as Moses the man of God had.

Which part of Christian comfort both might and ought to be more generally enjoyed of the servants of God, without either the least savoring of Monkerie, much less without the establishing and the bringing in of it again, which some profane Protestants little knowing the use of, will be ready (I doubt not) to imagine and say: as they pervert all other things to their own hurt. Although I could wish that they had no earthlier minds (I allow not their doing) then some of them had, who first left the dealings of the world to live apart out of company. As for the Popish progeny, who would be thought (as it were, by apish imitation) to follow and be like them, they are far from it, as they are from sound religion in their profession.

But to return: although I commend solitariness, I would yet thus be understood, that such as are troubled with melancholy, by means whereof they are much unable to govern themselves, and the rather through strong and vehement temptations, when they are oppressed with them; that such (I say) should not be pressed with it and urged to it, to be long or much alone, for fear of casting themselves into further and more dangerous dumps and extreme heaviness, as experience hath taught, till they may be stronger, and therefore with less danger may be permitted to the liberty of it, as other Christians.

## **CHAP. 17.**

Of the declaration of the sixth duty: Of using prosperity well.

The next duty to be observed, is: that with the same sanctified and sound heart we enjoy all our lawful liberties and commodities of this life rightly and soberly, from day today, whiles the Lord granteth them unto our uses: and whatsoever crosses and afflictions befall us in the day, (as both these are distinct parts of our life from the former) that we go under them patiently, meekly and thankfully.

These two parts of duty are required, not at someone time in the day, (as the first and second rules have their certain time, in which they are to be performed) but (as some of the other parts of daily direction) throughout the day: because there is no part of our life in the day, but it is either exercised with some cross or with likelihood and fear of it; or it is free from both, and enjoyeth sundry benefits of the Lord's; or (that which is the most usual and common case of God's servants) it is mixed and compounded of both: which of all these soever be our estate, we are in great danger, if we be unprovided for it: I mean; if we be not watchful in either of them to carry ourselves uprightly, and before the time of both if we pray not fervently with full resolution to it. And to say somewhat distinctly and severally of both, (although it be my purpose to say as little as I may, seeing I have by occasion spoken of both in another place:) of the first I will speak in this chapter; and in the next of the other.

It is not hard to understand what I mean by prosperity: properly, even all pleasures and delights, which may lawfully be enjoyed of the servants of God in this life, as health, riches, friends, peace, marriage, and all that appertain thereto, as wife, children, &c. These therefore which are things that a man would most desire, with freedom from afflictions which might impair the sweetness of them, we must know that it is a most difficult thing to possess them without great danger to our souls: and therefore the living in such an estate, as to abound in many good blessings of God, (which the world counteth happiness) is compared to a slippery way, in the which a man is ever sliding and ready to fall. Now then, to look to ourselves daily that we be not hurt, what less work is it, then as if a man journeying all the year through, yea and all his life long, should be constrained continually to be looking to his feet and steppes? Which thing how unwelcome it would be and wearisome, if it were but one day, who doth not see and perceive?



Now the case being like in this part of our travel and spiritual journey; therefore that we may be free from the hurt which might meet with us herein, these two points shall be needful to be considered and learned: First, how hardly in prosperity we walk safely from day today towards the kingdom of heaven: secondly, how and after what sort we may do it though it be hard, and how we may grow to the right use of the same: which who so attaineth unto, shall find no common, nor small ease in his life over others do, and pass by manifold and grievous dangers which few avoid.

And first, although a man should much better perform all Christian duties every day, who hath fewest afflictions to draw his heart from them, and who hath most helps by peace and wealth, to set him forward therein: yet (as men go to work) we see it is commonly clean contrary. For by reason of this, that men are so readily carried to use all earthly things amiss, even to their own hurt and hindrance, and so hardly brought to be the better by benefits; it cometh to pass, that it is found by experience with us for the most part, as we read in ages past that it was with men then: that is, the more that a man hath of these earthly commodities, the less he is enriched with spiritual grace; and as they are increased and multiplied, so this decayeth and is diminished. And yet I do not here speak of the wicked of the world (as oft times I put the Reader in mind:) but even of those which go before others in the embracing of the Gospel. For even of them, many are very faulty and blame worthy in this matter: and therefore they had need to be willing to take knowledge of it by the least watchword, and amend it; and not tarry with the world, till they be shamed for it and confounded.

Yea, and this is the more to be marked, because some of these, whiles they have been under the cross, have been humble and kept within good compass in their lives, and have had oft recourse to God in their

prayers (as they have confessed it was meet for them to do.) But why speak I this? Because when the Lord hath given them deliverance, they have showed themselves to have been no such persons as before, but have soon gone from their former care and have kicked up their heel, waxing wanton in their prosperity, even as they were forgetful of their former calamities, Psal. 119:67. So that it may truly be said, that few by earthly things are drawn on and encouraged to the love of heavenly: which yet is the end that the Lord hath in giving them. If they have rest from persecution and trouble, and enjoy peace in their days, how many do with the Churches mentioned in the Acts, take the benefit of it; that is, to edify and build up themselves the more strongly in knowledge, faith and godliness, and draw others thereto by their example?

And if their plenty of God's outward benefits be such, that they may eat of the fat and drink of the sweet: yet how many find the Lord's service more sweet daily to them, then they find his outward benefits? But they do rather after the manner of others, begin to rest in them many times and to say, Here is good being for us: whereas the more men have, the more they should look that they serve him with joy for all their abundance. And further, if they have time at will, wherein much good may be done to themselves and others, is this their chiefest care to redeem it to every good use because the days be evil, and to apply their hearts to wisdom, seeing they have but a while to live? Nay, that were too sad a matter for them to hear of. But numbers of them take up a great part of the day most commonly in the pleasures and delights, which are by evil custom in every season of the year afforded.

Wherein, for the satisfying of them to the full, if the public duties of God's worship in the family (which should be daily continued for the benefit of the whole company) be not neglected oft times, yet how

come they to them, and in what case are their hearts to the performing of them, when they savor of nothing else but their vain, if not unlawful, pleasures? Which complaint, if ever, may now in this generation be made of the better sort of Christians, and that also most rightly, when many of the gentry of this land and others, who had for certain causes justly moving them, for sundry years together banished out of their houses the use and practice of dicing and carding, with such profaneness and disorder as accompanieth the same, have within these few years (as though they could no longer forbear) brought them in again: A lamentable fruit of their wealth, peace, and prosperity among many other such. But if it be duly considered, what good might have been done through our land in this long time of peace and plenty, and how the opportunity, even the time of our visitation (as fit for holy duties, as fair weather for harvest) hath been over-slipped, (that I say no more) it ought justly to wring out plenty of tears for so great transgression.

But I will contain myself. Our Savior speaking but of one part or piece of prosperity, namely of riches, saith: Oh, with what difficulty shall they who have riches, enter into the kingdom of heaven? If he speak thus of riches, what (think we) is his judgment of them which with riches have many other kinds of blessings? With how much ado shall such go into the kingdom of heaven; and much more, govern themselves rightly from day today? And what marvel, seeing a rich man's riches are his strong city, and thereby he is bold to do many things willfully, which he durst not so presumptuously do if he had them not. They are baits, and do often draw his heart to be set upon them, that whiles they are in request and chiefly accounted of, there may be no place for better things to rule and reign there, although for shame and fear they are not altogether rejected; even as it may be said of play: Where that is entertained, good books are little red and occupied.

It was the last temptation that the Devil attempted our Savior withal (The glory and wealth of the world, I mean:) to teach us this, among many other things; That if the other two be overcome, yet the Devil looketh to prevail by this. What should I say of the innumerable hurts which even good men sustain by these benefits and good blessings of God, as that they hate one another, contend with and deceive one another, and make themselves strangers one to the other thereby: and (which is none of the least evils among other) their hearts are so knit to them, that they consider not how they take in hand their worldly business, nor how they vex and trouble their poor brethren (if any fall into their hands;) but go to work against them cruelly, or at least in rashness, with which nothing is well done. If we should but consider how they beat their brains about them every way, who are yet wealthy already, bestowing all their wisdom in devising how to increase and bring them in, when it were to be looked for, that the great riches [godliness] should be much more sought after: If, I say, we should consider this, we should enter into a very maze. By which, and many such like, it may with bitter complaint be lamented (of the which we have been long admonished:) that Religion in these many years of our peace, hath brought forth much wealth to the Church, but the daughter hath devoured and eat up the mother.

And that this which I say, may not be understood only of riches, know we that all lawful liberties do work the same effects, that men, for the most part, become worse by them, as in the Psalm the Prophet declareth: Before I was afflicted I went astray, that is, when I had my liberty: and therefore this shall serve to show, with how much ado they which have them, walk daily in a Christian course; and the rather, the more variety of earthly delights they enjoy with them. Now therefore it being thus, what cause have all such as are lovers of the truth (whom God suffereth to live in peace, health and

prosperity) to be wise and wary against so many dangers, and warned by the hurt of so many who have gone before us? And to learn how they may not be hindered nor holden back any way by their prosperity; but set forward rather, and that many ways, as it is most convenient? The watch-word is not in vain and needless, which was given to our fathers: When thou hast eat and art full: beware lest thou forget the Lord. But I will proceed. Therefore as I have now declared the one of these two points, that is, how hard it is, to use prosperity aright: so I will go forward with the other, namely how this maybe, that we may well use it, that it may be no snare nor hindrance to us.

And to this end we must consider, how nearly we are knit unto the same as hath been said, how naturally we desire to have all that our hearts do long after without regard, whether it be good or evil for us: which causeth us to esteem of all such things more highly then becometh us, and therefore to set our greatest care upon them, and to seek to enjoy them, whatsoever better things we lose and deprive ourselves of for them. This inordinate love which we bear to any lawful liberty or blessings pertaining to this life, must be by all means possible weakened and abated in us, which we have too much through our own folly strengthened and increased. And to obtain this, as we shall be able, some persuasions I will briefly set down. First therefore, this spiritual drunkenness is to be expelled, and the inordinate love of earthly things to be weakened and abated by diligent earnest viewing and weighing, how momentary and flitting all things of the greatest reckoning under the Sun, are; and how uncertain hold we have of them, even when we think ourselves most certain and sure of them. And further, by valuing and pricing them thereafter, as the Lord himself teacheth us to do, saying: The fashion or shadow of this world passeth away. And again: Happiness doth not consist in the things which a man possesseth; and of riches which

is counted the chiefest of all the rest, he saith: Why dost thou weary thyself to grow rich? Cease from thy wisdom: why dost thou cast thine eyes upon them? For they are nothing.

Also, we shall by little and little break off this near knot of amity betwixt our hearts, and earthly peace and prosperity, (as well as we love them) if we will suffer ourselves to be persuaded, how many ways we be in danger of sore plunges by means thereof: and that the Scripture giveth them many titles and names drawn from the effect which they work in most men, as that they are snares, thorns, chokes, because they entangle us, prick, and hold in and smother the many graces of God in us, that they bud not out and fructify. And so saith Saint Paul, that they pierce us through with many sorrows, being mere vexation and affliction of spirit, when men have given themselves after the course of the world, to seek what is the sweetness of them. Few Job's do know and find out the deceitfulness of riches, until after they have proved it, they complain too late, and in vain begin to repent, and say: We are deceived.

Besides, it is an especial good help to weaken the love of these earthly things, if we often record, that they are not our own, but borrowed: and therefore, as no wise man rejoiceth for the stock of money which he hath borrowed of another man, (which he must return home again) as if it were his own: so it is small wisdom for us, who are appointed to salvation by Jesus Christ, to delight in and set our hearts upon the things of this life, which are but lent us, and may every day be required again of us: but our own riches which shall never be taken from us, as the knowledge of God, the love of our brethren, joy and peace by the holy Ghost; these should so so make us in love with them, that the love of the other might be overshadowed thereby. Thus if we can think of all outward commodities of this life, and having this judgment of them, will daily meditate one

time or other of the momentary condition of them with unfeigned prayer to God to renounce and forsake our old love and acquaintance with them; we should find this knot more and more to be broken, and our thoughts not to be carried after them with such earnestness and continuance.

And if we could possibly think what hurt they have done us, even ourselves already (for what unsettling's from a Christian course do we (in a manner) sustain, but they are one cause of it, if not the only?) I am persuaded, if we could rightly think but of this one thing, we would abate our greediness, and put the knife to our throat, as the wise man wisheth in the like case; that is, to restrain our appetite. But as experience hath taught, that men's latter thoughts are, for the most part, better than the former (as they may well be, seeing they come with more mature deliberation:) so it may be said with grief, that when we have played the fools, by letting loose our former thoughts to worldly lusts, and cherishing of them, we seldom have the grace to light upon the latter; that is, to dignity and weed them out, unless (perhaps) upon our death-beds we complain, when yet oft times it is too late.

Furthermore, it would not a little help us forward to a slight and mean estimation of all earthly prosperity, if we would daily accustom ourselves to muse upon the examples of such, as have enjoyed the sundry commodities as plentifully as any of us do, and yet have been taken from them, and some of them in their flourishing age untimely; as leaving to the rest of us, who yet remain, a manifest spectacle of our mortality, and a warning of us to a moderate use of them, that we might not justify the worlds practice.

And it is another special mean to the contemning of the world (though it go against nature) to use to visit them, as others also in

their sickness (as we shall be able) and there mark how they then speak of them; that so we may see, how little good their commodities can do them, in comparison of that good which they have kept from them, and considering how greedily they have been sought after of them: for one would look that things so sought, should have more excellency in them then everyone seeth. And besides that, by going into the house of mourning, we may see and so be put in mind of our own death and departure, which cannot too oft be thought upon, and which is the end of all flesh; that thereby we may somewhat more like strangers, learn to use the world after: besides the thinking that we must give an account how we have gotten and used them.

Thus I have in some sort, showed how and by what means the love of all earthly things shall be weakened in us, without the which we can never use the lawful pleasures and profits of this life moderately and rightly: this one thing being added, that this advice be the more carefully and constantly regarded, seeing the danger were like to be great by the neglecting of it.

And now upon this which hath been said, it clearly and necessarily followeth, that if thus we get superiority and dominion over our hearts and affections in the use of earthly things, then our actions and dealings about these lawful liberties, shall be well ordered in the sight of God and men, to the great quietness and peace of our conscience: for the righteous is bold as a Lyon. For who doth not know, that as the heart is affected either well or ill: even so it draweth the words and works after it, to be like and suitable? Which is the cause why I labor to persuade Christians, to the subduing of the lusts and intemperate rebellions of the heart, and to have in mean reckoning and price all things here below, that they may be the less offensive in the whole course of their earthly dealings. For when we be thus resolved in our hearts constantly, watching thereto, that we



(as God hath taught us) will so far forsake all, as we shall thereby be hindered from following our Lord Jesus Christ in any point of his holy commandments; we are stayed from manifold abusing's of our liberties, as wealth, peace, preferment, and such like.

And when we can contain and keep our hearts from coveting and desiring any way to use our prosperity unlawfully, we shall neither injure others in anything that is theirs, nor have our commodities as snares, thorns and chokes to strangle and hurt ourselves; but in the enjoining of all blessings of this life, shall be sober and fruitful in good works, and more fervently longing after the treasures of the paradise of God. Which fruits of prosperity few do reap, but run into excess and pass their bounds one way or other: so truly it is said, That as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in and until the coming of the son of man: They eat, they drank, married wives and were married, &c. that is, they chiefly regarded these things rather than the manner how, or the end why; and more than they did consider, wherefore the Lord set them in this world. And this be said of the first branch of this duty; that is, of the using of prosperity, and the lawful liberties of this life rightly: and how God teacheth his children daily as their state shall require, to do the same accordingly, as it is one of the duties which is of necessity to be observed daily of all that desire well to bestow the day, and to give a good account thereof at the evening and end thereof.

Yet to such as object and ask, If I will debar them of their mirth and pleasures, which in their prosperity and through the benefit of their wealth they may enjoy, I will add this brief answer: I wish they prospered in health, strength, earthly commodities and peace, so as their souls might also prosper. And I thank God I am not so envious against the welfare of any of my good brethren, but that with the Apostle I can and do pray, that they might be altogether Christians;

that is, true and faithful servants of God without the bands or other hardness which some other of God's people do sustain and go under.

But seeing prosperity is a slippery way, it is meet that all such as desire to be free from dangerous falls, should look diligently to their steps: and seeing that our Savior himself hath taught us that it is an estate full of danger, they should not think much to be admonished and put in mind daily, to take heed that they stand sure and in safety. It is not enough, (think we) and a great favor of God, that he give us liberty to enjoy his earthly benefits, unless we abuse them to the fulfilling of our fleshly desires? Doth Christ allow us any otherwise to take our pleasure on the earth, then that it may not hinder us from following him by temperance and soberness, by humbleness and meekness, the way to heaven? Or doth he bestow more on some then upon others, that they who have much should set on edge the teeth of others by licentiousness?

We are called (and that most fitly) strangers: to teach us, that we should not be meddling, nor entangle ourselves here so, as we should be unready and unwilling to go home. And that is a right stranger-like living in the world, and an enjoining the lawful liberties of it, that we be made more fit thereby for the heavenly life, and not to linger after anything here or cling about it, so that we being tied to any lawful pleasure or profit we should not as free citizens of heaven be daily somewhat nearer it, and readier to go to it. And do we think that they are such strangers, who plead for such a liberty and rejoicing here, that their own consciences do tell them that they are not willing and ready to die? Are they such strangers, who are privy in their own hearts, that their rejoicing is most for the commodities and delights of this world, eating, drinking, pastime, marriage, gain and success in their dealings, &c. who if death should come upon them, whiles they are in the midst of them, must needs cry out and

say: O death, how unwelcome art thou unto us who have our pleasure in these?

It is the Lord that saith by his Prophet: Let not the rich rejoice in his riches, nor the strong in his strength, nor the wise in his wisdom: but he that will rejoice, let him rejoice in this, that he knoweth me. And it is our Savior which saith: Woe be to them which now laugh, for they shall howl and weep: woe be to them which are full, for they shall be hungry. And again: Son, thou in thy life time receivedst thy pleasure, therefore now art thou tormented. Lastly, Job that was dear to the Lord, said: If I have rejoiced for that my hands have gotten much, and for that my riches are great, even this were to deny the Almighty. Therefore know we, that our rejoicing ought not to be earthly: yea, as a godly man may not be glad for that he hath much, going no further; seeing that were but to be tied to the creature, and to rest in a broken and a deceitful stay: so neither may he rejoice in any other earthly thing whatsoever, but he setteth it as well as riches in the Lord's place, from which it ought to be banished. Now the heart of a Christian is the Lord's temple and dwelling place; and he it is that must dwell there, as he himself hath said: Give me thine heart, my son.

That must be where the treasure is: it must have no other treasure in heaven but him, nor any on the earth in comparison of him. So that it may be seen of all such as desire to be satisfied, that God hath not given to his faithful servants earthly prosperity to nail their hearts to it; but to prove them, whether anything be sweeter to them then he himself who hath given it, that is, whether the gift or the giver be in greatest request with them; and that all which he giveth them, might be an occasion to knit them nearer unto him; who will yet give much more to them which depend upon him: to this end (I say) all God's benefits serve.

And I have not denied in all that I have said, but that it becometh the best of God's servants to labor for earthly maintenance, that they may be able to give rather than to receive, and that without any just offense they may do it: and that they ought to acknowledge it for a great mercy of God, that he reacheth out his hand to help them with necessaries, even here where they be strangers, and to provide for their bodily necessities; and therefore to be thankful, yea and joyful in this respect, that they are freed from much care and distrust, and have the way made more easy thereby to the heavenly life: for want whereof many of their dear brethren are in much pensiveness and sorrow. But yet may they not in any wise take such sweetness in those things, that they forget or neglect better: but always remember, that they serve to a further end, that is, to seek better; and are not themselves the end of their hope, in which they should rest.

And so to conclude: it remaineth that we in no wise rejoice, nor put our delight in any transitory thing, but with most great diligence we use all earthly benefits of God daily and throughout our life, moderately. And this is to enjoy our prosperity aright, and to make that part of our life sweet and savory to us indeed which is passed therein. And this is that which I have thought convenient to be said of this sixth rule, namely: that it is a great part of godliness, every day to look to this with due regard, that we moderately and fruitfully use our lawful liberties, and all the commodities earthly of this present life.

## **CHAP. 18.**

Of the declaration of the seventh duty: Of bearing afflictions rightly every day they come.

The next part of our life not yet mentioned, is that which is under the cross and in affliction. Our duty here is, that when and so often as it shall please the Lord to try us therewith, and to change the course of prosperity or any part of it: yet that with the same well-ordered heart, which I have said should accompany our other actions and parts of our lives, with the same (I say) we be prepared to receive it from him: and count it no strange thing to be exercised with it; and the rather for this reason (as the Apostle admonished the godly of his time) that we are predestinate thereunto, even to be like unto Christ in afflictions; and also, seeing through many of them our way lieth to the kingdom of heaven.

And all may see how needful it is for us to hearten on ourselves by these and such like persuasions, to be willing to bear our crosses meekly and with cheerfulness, because we do so soon shrink back at the hearing of them, as the Apostles did when they heard that their master would go into Jury again, where the Jews before had sought to stone him; and seeing they be so unwelcome to us by nature, although we be subject to many and sundry, and that daily. It must not be with us, as it is with the most: that is, that we love not to hear of them when we have been awhile free from them, and so hope still for earthly peace, of the which we have no promise: but rest persuaded every day, that our heavenly Father knoweth what is best for us; and as he seeth affliction or freedom from it to be meetest, so he will always bring it to pass.

To this end we are admonished of the Prophet, to accustom ourselves to bear the yoke in our youth, that we may be the better acquainted with it when it shall be put upon us: that so we being tamed and subdued by it, and our proud and rebellious hearts brought under of him, we may bear it with the more ease and comfort; encouraged hereby, that if we be able to bear afflictions contentedly, and with

quiet and meek spirits, (which is the hardest part of our life) we may easily provide, to have our whole life sweet and joyful.

Furthermore, to this end that we may be ready to wait upon the Lord patiently in our chastisements, we must consider that every day Satan intendeth mischief against us, and he knoweth our weakness to be greatest in bearing the cross, and therefore will not leave us unassayed as much as in him lieth: and not so only, but also will terrify us with this persuasion, that they be greater than they are, and fear us with the oft and much thinking of them, that our sorrow may be increased. Against all which his cursed undermining of us, we having so great encouragement from the Lord, ought to be thus stayed: that such of them as we can, we may avoid; and the rest, we may go under contentedly, waiting for a good issue, even as in faith we pray for it: seeing our God will have us persuaded, that of very love and faithfulness he correcteth us whensoever we be corrected of him. But because we fail many times in observing these rules, and therefore find not grace then, to bear them aright, whiles they are upon us: nor afterwards get any wisdom, experience or comfort thereby; we must diligently and faithfully mark, how we be affected under them: that if we should be oppressed with confused and unprofitable heaviness, distrust or any other dangerous passions, we might learn before, that they be no fit companions for us; and sooner get out of them, after we espy them in us, and so betake ourselves to better government.

And that this labor be thought no more than necessary, we must know, that by Troubles we do not only mean great and unwonted losses, long sicknesses, persecutions, and such like: but those also which fall out very oft and commonly, as unkindness and discourtesy in neighbors; unthriftiness, unruliness and disobedience in children; unfaithfulness and negligence in servants; discommodities and

harms in family matters; with such like: all which to bear, without unquietness, impatience and unsettling ourselves out of the Christian course, must be thought no mean nor small gift of God; nor without daily and continual watchfulness and wise regard to be attained unto.

And I do the rather make mention of these troubles, which for the most part arise in our families as well as other ways, because many Christians do think through ignorance, that we are not to be directed in these common things, nor to be called to our reckoning and account for offending by impatience, anger, back-biting and heart-burning against any man, and for such like passions: which declareth, that as it is an hard thing for Christians to walk in the uprightness of their hearts, by performing other duties in the midst of their houses; so it is no less hard and rare in this bearing of discommodities and other troubles, to show themselves lights and examples to the rest of their family. But these unquietness's, which are counted small, are not to be admitted at any time in our lives, seeing they unsettle and draw us out of our course. Therefore that neither one nor other kind of affliction become unsettling's of us, this counsel we must take from the Lord, which I have now set down: that every day we arm ourselves against the fear of such as may come, and against impatience by such as already are come upon us.

Let us think it no toil to watch and look to ourselves thus, if we may by this means be rid of that which is toile indeed, yea greater toile; and ease ourselves on the contrary, a hundred-fold. For we shall not only provide well hereby, against those which are present: but as experience and proof of God's help bringeth hope which maketh not ashamed; so by our experience we shall find the like in our troubles to come. What strength got Joshua by this, that he had oft times believed God's promise, and found that he never failed him trusting

in his word which he had spoken concerning victory over his enemies, or deliverance from them? Insomuch that he after some proof of God's keeping promise with him, in bringing him over the river Jordan, in giving Jericho and the city Ay into his hands, in the battle against the five kings of Canaan; he triumpheth in his hope of conquest, (the Lord having promised to him victory over them) and therefore saith to his soldiers and men of war, before he overcame them: The Lord hath delivered them into your hands, and therefore be of good courage.

And what other thing made the Apostle Paul in great afflictions to stay himself upon God, and to cast his care upon him, but this experience and long proof which he had of God's tender care over him. It was (I say) that which made him express the same in these words: God hath delivered out of great tribulations, and doth deliver daily, and I am sure also that he will deliver in all time to come. This experience if we have (as who may not have it in many afflictions, if he have rested upon God therein?) it shall be a strong weapon to defend us from fainting, distrust or despairing, and to keep us from unsettledness, and able to uphold us in an infallible hope of a good issue, even before it come. But to this end we must hold ourselves fast to the prop of God's promises, and lie close to them, as an anker: and thus we being armed, we shall see the Lord's deliverance for us, as clearly as we may discern the arrow to fly in the air.

It is a great point of wisdom, to learn of God, thus to bear our trials and troubles, that first we commit the ordering and disposing of them to him as Hester did, by fasting and prayer of faith: secondly, that we use all lawful means whereby we may have a good success and end, as she did in going to the king for help against Haman's devilish devises: and then the third will follow, that God will turn them to the best. These three in one short verse the Prophet setteth



down together, saying: Commit thy way to God, and be thou doing good, and verily he will bring it to pass.

But if we will not be directed by the Lord in bearing our afflictions, (as the rebellious heart will be soon ready to cast off his yoke) but will take counsel of flesh and blood, as Saul and many such have done, yea and David at that one time (though smally to his comfort:) then this shall follow, either for want of preparing ourselves meekly for them before they come, or for not thankfully receiving them when they are come, they shall sore [frightened] and astonish us, and raise in our hearts such passions and distemperature, as will unsettle our whole course and bring us out of frame. In which estate as we shall be utterly unfit to any service of God: so shall we be also unmeet for any Christian society with men, we being so confounded in ourselves for our unwelcome troubles, and so disguised in our speech, countenance and behavior, by yielding and giving place to the frowardness and unbridledness of our hearts. By all which, who doth not see, that we do both add new troubles unto the former, and make them which God sendeth upon us, far more grievous then otherwise they should have been? For all who have experience, can tell, that the intemperance of our hearts, and the impatience which is suffered to bear sway in us, do raise many distractions and vexations in our lives, which we might else have been void of: and the Lord's trials and fatherly chastisements are thereby made far more irksome unto us.

And of this seventh duty thus much: whereby we may see, how necessary it is for us daily, beside the well beginning of the day and care for right using our prosperity moderately, that we be also very watchful, that our afflictions breed no disorder in us, but be quietly borne: that so all parts of our lives throughout the day, and the whole course of our ways may be ordered commendably and aright: that

even in the days of health and peace, we looking for our change, and laboring to bring our hearts to more humility through continual watching, and oft and earnest prayer, we may not only not count it strange, when even sharp visitations shall take hold of us, but in respect of the end thereof, (which is to do us much good) we may with willingness receive and go under them; especially, seeing (as hath been said) our most loving father hath fully certified us, that he hath no other meaning in sending them. And here mark, that as poor and rich are both taught their duty in common together: so there is somewhat to be learned of them both severally: the one to be more specially armed with contentation under his poverty; the other with humility and soberness, for the right and well using of his wealth and plenty.

## CHAP. 19.

Of the declaration of the eighth duty, namely: Of using religious exercises in our families.

Unto all the former duties which we must labor to perform, this is to be added (to the end we may enjoy as many liberties as we can:) that with the same well governed heart, which we have been taught to bring to the performing of them, we look that both in the morning and at even, as it shall stand best with the well performing of other duties, we and the other parts of our family, do reverently worship God together; that is to say, that we solemnly upon our knees make confession of our sins, and requests to him with thanksgiving. And because it is required, that the word of God should be taught by us to our children and charge, Gen. 18:19, therefore, that when we may conveniently, we instruct them as they be fit to conceive, in those things which are most necessary for them, training them up to answer to the same; and that they be encouraged to have acquaintance with the Scriptures and to be exercised in them from their childhood, 2. Tim. 3:15, that so the word of God may dwell in them plentifully, Col. 3:16, and to edify themselves in singing of Psalms to the praise of God, and the putting of themselves in mind of the heavenly melody and rejoicing, which they shall have with the Lord and his Saints in his kingdom. Even this (I say) is another of those duties which is as oft as may be to be performed in our families; I say, as oft as may be, because no man's conscience should be accused for the omitting of it on some days upon necessity which may fall out: but yet no man for all that may fain necessity, to pass over a duty of so great use, and for so long continuance, even

throughout his life, except he supply the omitting of it, in some answerable sort otherwise.

And whereas by the examples of God's holy servants, this duty of calling upon God is commended to us as to have been offered to God three times in the day; the other, of teaching their families, as a thing ordinary and usual: what cause is there why we in whose days the light of the truth shineth more clearly than it did in theirs, should be behind them in any such duties sometime by ourselves, sometime with our families, until we might say: that we have been suitable to them, in testifying our love to God whom we obey in performing them, and the religious care of our own good which we are sure can never be enough? As for the daily continuance of this duty from time to time throughout our life, although I doubt not but that many do it now and then, who yet will not tie themselves unto it constantly, and therefore reap the slighter fruit of it; some reasons I will allege to persuade them.

And first, it may please such to understand, that our necessities do require it one day as much and as well as another (except necessity hinder, as hath been said before) seeing some are rude, some worldly, some ignorant, and the best are forgetful: and we find, that every day bringeth with it sufficient cause to renew our faith and strength against sin, and all kinds of discouragements, and to honor and praise God (if it be well considered) for his daily favors and kindness. For such duties being in use daily, do hold us from some evil, which we should otherwise do.

Besides, seeing particular families are the members and parts of the church, and every governor is that in the family, that the Minister is in the congregation: therefore if they be not accustomed to worship and serve God at home, how shall they be able to do it with profit in

the assembly? Especially seeing experience teacheth, that the mind being unseasoned all the week at home, is further off from goodness on the Sabbath; and yet all which is done this way both publicly and privately, is little enough even in the best Christians.

And that we come the oftener and more cheerfully hereunto, as oft as it shall behoove us, we must know and consider, that we have therein communion and fellowship with the Lord, and are admitted to speak and break our minds unto him, and so have our souls most sweetly refreshed thereby, as if we met before him publicly. And what is like unto such liberty, that in a reverent sort we may be admitted to speak unto the Lord, and to have him make answer to us again? So that, it should not be hard for us to be brought to enjoy so great commodity, but rather to count our state the more happy the offer that we may be partakers of such a benefit.

Again, it is meet that we should in this sort have our recourse to him daily, to the end that our whole conversation may savor of him; that as all abundance of heavenly odors (that is, of spiritual grace) do flow from his Majesty to all that are about him and by the prayer of faith come near him, more fragrant then Aaron's ointment: so we being conversant with him in this heavenly manner, may hereby, as by a sweet preservative, keep ourselves from all annoyance of Satan and the world. And therefore it is no wisdom for us to be long from him in this manner, especially having such free access unto him whensoever we list. This reason should the easilier persuade us, because we see how by occasion of earthly dealings, our earthly minds draw us to be altogether earthly: in our talk one to another, churlish, hot, bitter, or light, profane, rash: and so in our behavior testifying nothing else but a worldly mind. And is anything more to be desired then the changing of this course? But what is fitter than this, when we join daily together in such holy manner against it, even

there where the faults are committed? And thus I having showed, that there is no cause why we should think much to tie ourselves daily as we shall be able to these duties, weigh now a little what companions we have in the Scriptures in the performance of them. Abraham is renowned of God for his diligence and faithfulness in the performing of these exercises of religion in his family: for instructing them, and therefore (no doubt) praying with them, seeing all things are sanctified by the word and prayer, 1. Tim. 4. Joshua also who professed openly that he and his household would serve the Lord, did, not darkly, declare therein, that the chief parts of God's service were not neglected, that is, prayer, thanks, and the teaching them their duties. And Cornelius having this commendation in the Scripture, that he feared God with all his household: and besides, that he was given much to prayer; hath left sufficient testimony, that both he prayed with his household as well as privately by himself alone, and also that he labored and used the means of instructing the same, whereby he might bring them to that fear of God which was in them. Therefore seeing such worthy servants of God have gone before us in the performance of these duties in their families; and so have continued them (as there is no doubt) as they have seen their daily necessity to require, and that they reaped singular fruit thereby: therefore it shall be necessary for us, oft and usually to meet together for the private worshipping of God in our family the whole together, be it small or great.

For this may all see and easily know, that God hath commanded that parents and fathers of families should rehearse his laws continually unto their children, and (as it were) whet their memories with them by talking of them in their house, and when they lie down, and when they rise up, and to bring the word of God into familiar acquaintance with them: which is no more then he saw necessary for them.

By the which commandment we may see, how this latter age of ours is degenerated from the holy custom of religious exercises in our families, which were in use so many thousand years ago. For there can be no time found throughout the day, nay the whole week, in many Christians houses, to be occupied about such matters; and yet (which maketh their sin the greater) how are they letted from them? By more weighty occasions? No: but partly through ignorance, so that they could not; through the trifling out of the time in idle and unnecessary talk or folly: and partly through continual taking up of it in one worldly thing or other, or nourishing teachiness and such like; by which their prayers (as well as all other good things) are broken off: whereas they should do it by themselves alone also, rather than neglect it with their household; the Lord so requiring of us the one, that we should do the other also; and not so tied us to one time, that we should look after it at no other, (for it should be oft times, as we heard in Deuteronomy:) but thereby teacheth us in wisdom to appoint to ourselves some certain time or other for that his service, lest we should observe no time but omit it altogether.

And as for the fruit of this duty, if it be performed with reverence of us as the Lord himself hath taught us, it is an opening of the door of his treasury unto us; as we who have any experience, can truly say: That by it we have not been meanly enriched. So that such prayer and holy exercise is suitable and answerable to the other parts of Christian duty which are to be performed throughout the day, as by the other duties before mentioned may appear. And so our prayer (as I said before of the use of it in the morning) shall be an help to godly life, to make us live better: and our good life an help to our prayer, that we may pray more fervently.

Therefore (to say no more of this point) because I have before set down after what manner we ought to pray, and present ourselves

before God in every Christian exercise, if we purpose and endeavor constantly to continue the same about evening and morning; there remaineth no more but this, that we take heed to our covenant indeed, and that we break it not off by every light occasion: neither give place to such lets as Satan will raise up in our way; as, by the untowardness of our heart, by sleep and slothfulness, the coming in of strangers, and occasion of ordinary business; neither use it for fashion: yea and this let us know, that if the ruler of the family perform not this duty, yet is the Christian familist to perform it by himself. And of the eighth rule thus much.

## **CHAP. 20.**

Of the declaration of the ninth and last duty: Of viewing the day.

Now the last duty remaineth: that thou must with the same well-ordered heart, whereby thou hast been taught to go through all the actions of the day, look back before thy lying down how thou hast passed it, how far forth thou hast walked with God in it as thou art directed and taught; and wherein (as thou art able to remember) thou hast offended, whether thou hast remitted thy care and watch, and how thou hast wandered thereby after the desire of thine own heart. That thy soul may rejoice in the blessing which thou hast found, (so far as thou hast been guided aright) and thou mayest by this experience hope more confidently, that thou shalt with more ease keep the same course hereafter: and for thy straying's and infirmities be sorrowful and displeased with thyself, that so thou mayest both humble thyself and crave pardon for thy sin, and be the more careful to sin no more in that manner. This I am sure every sound-hearted Christian must needs approve of, and think him in good case who thus lieth down to his rest. For this is indeed to lie



down in peace and safety, that it may be suitable to his awaking and entering into the day on the morning.

And the benefit and fruit of this travel who would not be glad to reap and enjoy, which is, continual safety and a prosperous estate, whiles a Christian thus setteth himself to pass the days of his pilgrimage, and one of them as another, when his heart is looking after his actions in and through the day that God may be pleased? This were to lead a stranger-like life indeed and a walking with God: which is no more than should be aimed at by him, and the necessariest work which he hath to do. Such a one shall well prove that he seeketh a kingdom elsewhere, and looketh not for his heaven here. And if it be asked, whether we look hereby to be void of sin: I say no. But yet if in this course there have (notwithstanding the care of pleasing God in the day) something escaped, which ought worthily to trouble us (as by Satan's malice and vigilancy, and our own corruption may easily come to pass:) yet by this order taking with ourselves that hath been mentioned, it shall not sleep with us; but we having so far prevailed with our selves, as thus to hunt and pursue it, and to expel and banish it, and so reconcile ourselves to our God (as it is said: If any man sin we have an Advocate) before our lying down, what a quiet and sweet estate is this like to be?

But it is (will some say) an offering of great violence to ourselves to do thus daily, and more then God's word imposeth upon us: therefore except it be proved to us by authority of Scripture, we will leave it to such as list to be subject to it. To whom I answer: That the violence which is offered, is but to the flesh, to the which we are not debtors; and therefore are not to take thought to fulfill the lusts of it, but to hinder them rather: which shall be granted of necessity, if it be proved that God commandeth us to offer such violence to ourselves, and that he straightly chargeth us that we lie not down in our sins,

neither be bold to sleep in them: the which, what other thing is it, then that we so consider and look back unto our actions in the day, that we may have peace when we lie down at even?

The words of the Lord, which I allege to this purpose are these: Be angry, but sin not: let not the Sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil. In the which words there is more required, then in this place I urge: but yet, even that also. For the Apostle teacheth, that if anger be kindled in us for want of heed-taking, yet that we should soon allay the same: but if through the hardness of the heart, after sin is committed it is not by and by acknowledged and repented of, but it remaineth and boileth in us; yet we must force ourselves to relent and crave pardon of it before the Sun go down, and so before we dare give ourselves to rest, lest the devil prevailing so far with us, we find it harder afterwards to remove it.

Now we know, that other sins are in a like detestation with God that anger is; and therefore that they must be no more suffered to abide within us then it: and consequently, if we be privy in ourselves to any like sin that we have offended, we should expel and drive out the same as poison, that it lodge not, nor remain with us. And to do this, it is necessary that we take some convenient time to us, both to search and inquire what we have done, and withal to purge ourselves from it accordingly.

But here if any think that this was not intended of the Apostle, that we should before we fall asleep, consider how we have passed the day; neither will I precisely urge the hour or time so particularly: (for indeed he requireth it to be done sooner, rather than that it should be deferred:) so I say likewise, that if this care be conscionably kept at some other time of the day, that there be peace maintained betwixt God and us, it is well; but if that be not performed before, at least

before our lying down it ought to be: which also, is the time very fit to commend our souls into the hands of God, not knowing whether we shall rise in the morning.

Besides if it be required by the holy Ghost in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that we take heed that there be not at any time, and so any part of the day, in us an evil heart, we being forgetful and slow to observe such a charge; can any deny, but that he doth there as well require, that we should sometime look back to see how we have regarded the charge that is given us? And is any time ordinarily and for the most part fitter for that business, then when we have ended the day? Except some special sin committed in the day do require a more speedy examining of ourselves before. And if Job (as we read of him) did every day of his children's banqueting together, offer sacrifice to God and pray for them, and command them to cleanse their hearts and sanctify themselves, (for so it is said that Job did every day) adding this reason, Lest they might therein offend God: is it any marvel, if we in our own person do retain this care every day, and use this practice? For even as men who are in great occupying's, do not only write their takings and their laying's out, but do also at even confer them together, lest any delay of time should cause forgetfulness (and yet this labor they think needful about things that shall perish:) so is it much more necessary in the accounts of our souls that we should do; that is, daily look what we gain or lose, that we may procure to ourselves thereby most sound safety, and provide also the better for the time to come to do the like, and that with more ease. There is nothing against this duty so much, as the profane custom of the world, to whom all goodness and controlling of their licentious courses is unsavory, and therefore unwelcome and ridiculous. But let such go: know we, that if we desire to give an easy reckoning to God at our latter end, it is our wisdom and the best provision we can make for ourselves, to yield with all

conscionableness, a reckoning to the Lord at the end of every day: and so much the rather, because we love no after reckonings to be brought against us; which may justly be feared, when we have not endeavored faithfully to do the same from day today, but are accused by our consciences, that we have dealt too slightly; yea hollowly sometime, and too much favoring ourselves in passing by many particulars, which we were willing to be forgotten and buried.

That which we may read in heathen Poets, as Pythagoras, and others concerning this matter, may and ought worthily to put to shame a number of Christians. They wrote, that a man should look back at the end of the day, how and in what manner it hath been spent and passed: which cogitation (it is to be feared) hath not once entered into the heart of many, which profess to know God in Christ. For such as see any cause of going about it, this I will say to help them forward: that the more circumspect they have been in observing of their ways, and the more diligently the governing of the heart and life be kept throughout the day; the more readily and willingly shall they go about this view of the day-spending at their lying down: neither shall it be cast off, or neglected and untowardly taken in hand, but when they have been too secure and slight in doing the duties of the day. Neither would I lay upon any a burden, which they be not able to bear: calling God to record, that I seek in this as in the rest which I have said, only the glory of God, and the further peace and comfort to all the faithful, and the high pricing and estimation of a godly life, which will be much set by where the life is so looked to in the day as I have wished, and at our lying down viewed in this manner: and therefore wishing everyone according to the light and grace which he hath received to consider, whether he can say any less but that they walk most safely and most confident, who go about (as they shall be able) to make an end of the day in this manner. And the reason why this is required, as the last work beside prayer in the family, is,

because a Christian hath somewhat to mention and deal about, and complain of particularly concerning himself, which he cannot so well be satisfied in, when he prayeth in company. And he that hath most warily looked to himself in the day, and joined with the family in duties of humiliation at night, shall see cause enough to add this duty to both: as we read it written of Master Bradford, (who had much inward communion with God) that he was never satisfied in the duties he did through the day, and namely in praying at the Chapel (when he was fellow of a college) and in his chamber with his pupils, until he had also poured out his heart to the Lord by himself alone. But yet notwithstanding this which I have said, special regard ought to be had of the many bodily infirmities, diseases and sicknesses, with the feebleness of mind, ignorance and other encumbrances, which God's dear children shall be afflicted with: for they cannot do as other may, and therefore as everyone shall be more oppressed then other, so he must needs be the more respected. For in such cases the bare lifting up of the heart to God sincerely, is as much; and mercy (I know) is better than sacrifice: but withal, this must be granted, that the more godly ever one is, the more he will bewail his wants, and so this among the rest; which doth no less in a well ordered heart, then a kind purgation, discharge the soul of all such dross as remaineth to wait him a mischief. Thus I have more largely, as I have thought it expedient, gone over these parts of the life of a Christian, which for the most part are every day to be done, the better to direct him therein: and so likewise I have said that which I intended of this whole Treatise. It remaineth now to see how the practice of it is by Satan and ourselves broken off and hindered: which is in the next Treatise to be set down and handled. But first, I think good to add these two things: The one, that as I have set down rules for daily direction: so for the helping of the weaker sort some example also be showed unto them thereof: The other, what use is to be made of the whole Treatise.

After what manner a Christian should view his passing of the day at night.

As concerning the first this I have thought expedient to say: When thou goest alone by thyself for this purpose, first call to mind the several actions (as thou canst) from thy first awakening: how thou diddest awake and (as soon as thou wert ready) take order about necessaries which must be done, and then wentest to prayer, after to thy calling: then haddest occasion to be in some company, and how thou diddest look to thyself therein: if at another time in the day thou wast alone, or at exercise of prayer in family or at meat: in another part of the day haddest some cross befall thee, and some ill news brought unto thee: or if thou hast dealt and communed about worldly affairs, buying or selling, how thou diddest it, and what care thou haddest therein. These or any other like unto these whatsoever actions or the manner of them, or whatsoever the cogitations and desires of thine heart have been, whether they were good or bad, call to mind as many of them as thou canst. Thus look back (as thou art able to remember) how thou hast spent the day from one thing to another, and from one place where thou hast been to another: which though at the first it shall seem strange and hard to do, yet in time will be more easy. When thou hast thus done, thou shalt see how thou hast had use of any of the nine duties set down, which are the common and ordinary actions of the day: and how the eight inward graces which ought to be companions to us every day, have accompanied thee: and then, so far as thou mayest truly do it, give thanks for all grace whereby thou hast been guided, and humble thyself in confessing thy defaults, and praying as thou shall see cause.

I have set down a pattern and example to direct thee therein, which as thine estate doth agree with it, follow.

A form or example of viewing or passing of the day, when we are ready to lie down at even.

I thank thee, O Lord, for my awaking with thee, and that with a willing and ready mind I entered into the day after, with calling upon thee (if thou diddest so) and for that I had liberty and opportunity thereto: and that afterward I went cheerfully to the duties of my calling, or supplied the omitting thereof, some other way with a good conscience: and that I was wary in company and in solitariness, and in my prosperity, and under my chastisements that I might not offend; but that I did some good as I could: and that I had part in family exercises, and had care in my earthly dealings that I might not be made worldly by them: that I have taken any benefit by meditation and reading (if thou hast done so:) and now at the end of the day, that I look back how I have passed the day.

Thus, as these or any of them have been done of thee, call them to mind, as thou canst, and how they were done: and as they and such like are the chief actions to be done in the day; so proceed in giving thanks for doing them (or so far as thou hast) with thy mind seasoned with the graces, which should direct all the actions of thy life through the day: even these eight, thus:

I also thank thee (O Lord) that in these actions and parts of my life, I have not done them in opinion of any goodness in me, but by thy grace: and have thereby humbled myself for my sins, and embraced pardon by faith: and by the same faith, have been holden from many sins, and kept in doing many duties, as love, mercy, uprightness, and the works of my calling: and have had some consideration of my mortality, and looked for thy coming: [on the Sabbath, that I have attended to sanctify it in public and private exercises] and that I have held the peace which passeth understanding: and had thy kindness

in remembrance thankfully, with some use of watching and praying: and now viewed the passing of this day in this poor manner: let experience bring hope of better doing this from day today. (And if thine heart go with the mentioning of these, thou shalt find savor in them.) But seeing I have faulted and failed many ways, both in good doing, and the right manner of it: and in following the devices and desires of my heart too much (here if any particular action or corruption be remembered of thee, bewail it, accuse and judge thyself and renounce it, that thou mayest find mercy in that thy need:) I confess and renounce the same, praying for Christ's sake to be pardoned; that I may lie down in peace.

The second thing which I said I would add, was the use of this doctrine. For the use of the doctrine of this Treatise, of daily guiding thy soul and life, it may be gathered out of that which hath been said of it; and out of this last pattern or example so far as thou seest nothing in it, which God approveth not. And that is in few words: that every day and through the day, thou wean and withdraw thine heart from any such noisome bait or provocation, as suffereth thee not to arise in the morning, to walk through the day, and to lie down at night in peace and safety under God's protection: and every day, I still say, wishing thee to remember, that if thou beest negligent and careless but one day, that may fall on thee to vex thee long after, which should not else fall out in thy whole life. And that part of life which will not stand with this, let it, as deadly poison, be carefully avoided and rejected of thee.

Here followeth a prayer, containing the sum of the life which is to be daily led of a true Christian.

A form or pattern to teach and direct a Christian how to begin the day with meditation and prayer, and confession of sin, and thanks



after he hath first awaked with the Lord: containing in it the matter of this Treatise, necessary for him to practice throughout the day following, and for every day. The sum may be drawn out of it more briefly.

O Lord God most mighty and merciful through Jesus Christ, let that mind be in me which is in thy faithful people, and with the which thou delightest to be sought unto, sound and without hypocrisy, humble, meek, teachable to every good thing, fitly and readily disposed unto every good work: let me be framed this morning to the liking of the Christian course, as I have learned it out of thy word, and have tried that it is the only happy estate which here can be enjoyed. And with this mind let me enter into my meditation, thanksgiving, confession of sins and prayer. For whom have I in heaven (O Lord) but thee? Or whom do I desire on earth in comparison of thee? Who doest whatsoever it pleaseth thee, and hast all creatures even the Devils subject to thee: who, as thou hast filled the whole earth with thy goodness; so particularly thy mercies are wonderful to me, and that my soul knoweth right well. And as in thy favor is life and happiness: so thou as one abounding in love and compassion, hast counseled, yea and commanded us for our own good to seek it, that we might be happy by it. And yet, lest we should be deceived with the delusions and baits of this world and set our delight on them, thou soundest this alarm in our ears daily, that all things in this world are transitory, vain and soon flitting away, and we ourselves with them daily drawing unto our end. Thou hast caused this to be published in our hearing, that all flesh is grass, and the glory and beauty of it, as the flower of the field that fadeth: and that all things below the more they have been delighted in, the more deeply they shall sting and vex us when they forsake us. And lest we should judge and hope of our estate after the deceitful dreams of our own brain, as we are most easily inclined to do, thou hast lively set

out our whole shape as in a glass, to be full of misery and cursedness, if we have not yet attained to know that we are thy sons and daughters, and that our names are written in the book of life. These all and such like while I meditate upon, as also, that thou wouldest have us every day make our salvation more sure, and to be persuaded of thine unchangeable love; I wonder at them, and most of all to consider thine inestimable and unutterable kindness in them all. This draweth from me (as there is exceeding great cause) unfeigned thanks, with joy unspeakable and glorious, especially for that I see, thou hast done all this for me, even the unworthiest of other: that for my sake thou gavest thy dear son to death, that he might bring me to everlasting life: that to me among other, thou wouldest have the glad tidings of it to be brought and preached, to the end that I may know myself as surely to be one of thine, as if I were gathered up to my fathers to enjoy thy presence most glorious already: that of me among the rest of thy chosen ones, thou hast an especial regard and care against all things that might hurt me, and wilt continue the same even to my lives end, when I shall fear neither trouble nor danger, neither Devil nor hell anymore: that thou hast granted me to know it by faith, and in token thereof hast sanctified me and made me able to love goodness and loath evil in some measure: that thou hast wrought repentance in my heart, whereby I endeavor to forsake all known sins, and to please thee in all things: that thou hast given me a delight in thy word, whereas many find little savor in it: that thou turnest mine afflictions to my good, and teachest me the right and sober use of my prosperity: that thou givest me access unto thy majesty by prayer, when I will and for whatsoever is needful: that I have liberty to use all other helps for the maintaining of a godly life: that I may rise up when I have fallen and offended thee, and return to thee again: that thou hast given me to strive against sin and Satan as a soldier of Christ, and makest me to find joy in the Christian life, and thy service to be perfect freedom. And yet for all this, that thou

givest me hope of nearer communion with thee: that thou assurest me, that through thy power I shall be enabled to persevere in this Christian course to my lives end, and that after it I shall be received into glory.

And further, that thou hast not only bestowed these great privileges upon me, which are proper and peculiar to thine own children, but also hast in most gracious manner provided for the continuance of these unto me, and ministered abundantly unto me the good things of this life: as, to live under a most Christian and religious Prince and King defending and maintaining the Gospel against all Antichristian malice and tyranny and other adversary power, and the same truly and sincerely preached, and by whom our lives, liberties and livings are peaceably continued. I thankfully also acknowledge thy great mercy for the fellowship which I have with thy good servants in living with them, and for that credit and favor which thou grantest me among them: also for convenient habitation, competency of thy outward blessing, good liking, contentation and agreement in marriage (or if ones state require it, out of it) for health and strength to walk in my particular calling, and the benefit of a lawful calling itself, for freedom from grievous pains and diseases; from suite and service, burden and bondage to Pope and tyrant and all other unreasonable ones: for blessing and success in my lawful affairs (other benefits mention, as thou shalt have cause.)

These thy mercies with many other daily renewed upon me, both to the comfort of soul and body, do cause me (I say) to think myself infinitely beholding and bound to thy Majesty, and to say: O Lord, what is man, that thou so delightest in him? And again: What shall I render unto thee for all thy kindness, which hath no end nor measure? This love therefore constraineth me (contrary to my corrupt nature) to be most willingly subject to thy will and holy

government: this maketh thy commandments not to be to me, as sometime they were, burdensome and unwelcome, but sweet and pleasant: this causeth the strength of mine unruly lusts and unlawful desires to [diminish] and be weakened in me, contrary to that which sometime I have found: and persuadeth me, that even my afflictions and the hardest parts of my life are sent, not in thine anger and displeasure, but of favor and mercy; and that for my good thou doest of very faithfulness, cause me (when so ever I am chastised) to be corrected. And so, for thine afflicting of me also, I am and more learn, daily to be thankful. And the rather I see just cause hereof, because I am privy in mine own heart, how little cause I give of this tender handling, and most kind regarding of me: yea rather, I see causes innumerable, why I should be given up into a reprobate sense; and both be made an example unto others in this life, of misery; and after, be cast into endless woe. For besides mine original sin wherein I was conceived and borne, my whole life (before I was called to know thee to be my Savior through Christ my redeemer) was nothing else but an utter departing from thee, and a dishonoring of thy name. In every commandment and branch thereof, I was rebellious, and disobedient to thee, and that as many times as I have hairs upon my head. And since thou hast washed me from my wickedness, and purged me from my sins, whereas I thought I should have roundly and readily liked and submitted myself to thy holy will, which is the rule of righteousness; yet I have felt, and do daily, that I am hindered much from that good course which I desire; not doing the good which I would most willingly, but oft times that which I allow not: and yet besides this, I perceive, that there is much sin in me which I know not (as from time to time since my first believing in thee, I have by little and little espied and found out:) so that most justly I may say: Oh Lord, who can tell the manifold errors of this life, or how oft he offendeth thee? And as for the deceitfulness of sin, who is wise enough to discern it in many things? As when we shall be angry

for a just cause; when we shall give our eye and heart liberty to please themselves in that which they desire; when we grow weak in faith, whiles we be about our lawful business; and such like: which because I feel myself to be incombered with, and with many such, I do here as most unworthy in myself, acknowledge the same, and humbly sue unto thee (O heavenly father) for thy dear sons sake Jesus Christ to pardon still my sins and corruption, who do confess, that I offend thee so oft in the day as I cannot express: and this morning to receive me graciously into thy favorable protection, that I may be satiate and replenished with thy loving kindness, so, that all the day after I may retain the savor of it; have my heart so sweetly seasoned with it, that I may find and feel all my actions as good things to proceed out of the good treasury of it: and not to be fleshly, rebellious and corrupt, as proceeding from a root of bitterness. And as for the sin which is hidden from me, reveal and bring to light unto me, that I may be shamed and humbled thereby, and not abuse thy pardoning of me to bold licentiousness, making that a color of evil in me: but let me pluck down all pride of my heart, and see myself daily, and so this day, more indebted to thy majesty, then otherwise I could possibly think myself to be; and to send up more oft and earnest prayers against the same.

Thus (good Lord) let me sensibly feel this mornings work to be effectual through thy blessing, (even as it is thine own ordinance, that I should begin the day thus) that I may have my heart enlarged hereby, to do my other duties with more cheer and fruitfulness: and that I being thus persuaded of thy favor, may also be assured that thou wilt be with me, to assist me and bless me in all the lawful works and actions which thou hast appointed me this day to do. And seeing thou hast appointed, that we should be occupied in some travel and work profitable to the commonwealth, which also may keep ourselves from idleness, incline my heart to obey this thy

commandment, not only for other causes, but chiefly because thou wilt have it so, and with cheerfulness that may shake off tediousness and untowardness, as far as of my frailty may be obtained. In the works of my calling let me keep my heart from all distemperature, disorder and rebellion, and contain myself from every evil way: in the good success which thou givest, let me not be lifted up with lightness: in the contrary, not cast down with immoderate heaviness. Let me see good and sufficient cause of intermitting the same as oft as I cease from it, and let my mind be stable and well settled to follow thee, though the actions of the day be many and variable. In all companies let me frame myself this day, to be harmless and innocent at home: let me be wary against the common evils which are in families, as brawling, disagreeing with any, anger, uncharitableness, reviling, provoking, or being provoked by others; but forbearing and forgiving, if I have ought against any; so let me be free from foolish jesting, slandering of others, lying, unprofitable and needless talking: So abroad, let me not fashion myself after the evil example of the world in these or the like, but humbly carrying myself towards mine equals, giving honor to my betters; and making myself equal with those who are my inferiors, as knowing myself what I am. And not only so, but as I shall have opportunity, grant (good Lord) that I may do good by exhorting, teaching, comforting and admonishing, and offering myself to take good by receiving the same where I may, that thus I may leave no ill savor in any place; but with comfort, call to mind the companies that I have been in, and not with an evil conscience. And that part of the day which I shall have free from the fore-mentioned duties to be alone, whether journeying, sitting, walking or lying, grant (most merciful father) that my heart may be weaned from vain cogitations and fond desires even the secretest: and that out of the good treasury of my heart, I may raise holy and profitable meditations; oft musing of the heavenly things contained in thy word, namely, thy mercies, of mine own mortality, troubles,

subjection to sin and Satan: and how I may order aright all my lawful affairs, and disgrace and bring in discredit with my heart all iniquity and the very appearance thereof. Let me aim at these things this day, as at a mark. And whereas (most merciful father) we are wont to go to prayer, hearing, conferring, and reading of thy word with much unwillingness and untowardness; and to be sleepy and irreverent therein; grant, that I may be armed against these: and contrarily may stir up myself to cheerfulness and gladness when such times in the day come, seeing thou hast appointed them to be especial helps for my weakness; laboring, that my heart may be affected with them, and strength obtained thereby from Christ Jesus my head, to go forward in my several duties.

Let me in all these and other actions this day, hold fast my confidence in thee, that thou hast a fatherly care over me, both in turning my afflictions (which it shall please thee to send) to my great good, and granting me many sweet blessings for my further encouragement: that when I shall be persuaded, that they are both, from thee of a fatherly compassion and tender care, I may greatly be upholden and comforted. And whatsoever I shall have to deal in with any man, though I be not in presence with him, let me ever give that which is due to him, as far as I see it to appertain to me: especially in the commodities of this life, that none may have any just cause to complain of any injury done by me: neither may I have any wound of conscience at any time for such gain or substance, and the rather for that I am given too much to look after mine own right: and with this, let mercy and compassion be joined, that I may as thou hast enabled me, glad the hearts of such thy poor servants, as whose necessities it most appertaineth to me to relieve. And so long as in thy fatherly wisdom thou hast purposed to grant me health and prosperity, let me use and enjoy the same with much thankfulness; and soberly, humbly and meekly carry myself in that estate, not thinking myself

anything better then such as want it: let me not disdain others, nor myself be drowned in idleness, sensuality and sortish ease; but let me be so much the more profitable in every good work whiles thou givest me so many helps thereto, then in afflictions I could be; that so I may serve thy majesty with a sound mind and body, so far as thou shalt see it expedient. And yet not promising to myself continuance of peace and prosperity, but to look for my change: to learn to be abased, and to want: and contentedly, thankfully and patiently to take up that cross which thou shalt allot unto me; receiving much comfort in the trial of my faith by thy chastising of me, and for that I know that in great mercy and love thou doest it. And (good Lord) keep from me heavy judgments which are above my strength: and when thou freest me from many troubles, let me in no wise trouble myself with an evil conscience. And because I am occupied about many things in the day, and therefore am more ready (through the Devils malice and vigilancy, who seeketh all occasions against me) to be unsettled and brought out of frame, grant (most loving Father) that I may at such times remember, how I ought to have a stayed mind and constant, ever counting one thing to be necessary in the midst of all my business, dealings and variety of actions: and that is, that I may highly prize thy word, that so I may do thy will; seeing I have then most need of this grace of faithfulness and care, when the danger is greatest. And yet, if I should be overtaken with any forgetfulness, and unawares be prevented by Satan, slipping into any security, rashness, earthliness of mind, or such like blind-folding of me that I should be thereby unsettled, and this my course of holy walking be broken off; yet (good Lord) leave me not over-long in that danger: grant me to espy my fall and offense whatsoever it be, and not to hide it in any wise, but speedily to acknowledge it, that I may obtain mercy for it at thy hands, and so may return to thee again, because I have sufficiently seen and tried that it is no living, but worse than death, to have thee at any time against me. Lastly, I most



humbly beseech thee, that I may so warily carry myself throughout this day in all that I go about, that I may not be unwilling to view my doings and what hath been done amiss, at evening, and reverently look back and examine how I have spent it, and that by these rules whereby I have prayed to be directed: and that I may be willing to see where I have failed, that I may the better know what badness doth still remain in me; that so I may have just occasion to humble myself and confess my sin to thee, and may make an end of all breaches, not lying down in any of them unrepented. Let me count this no burden nor toile to do it, (as the most of the world do, who thereby provide so many after-reckonings for themselves, that they cannot answer one among a thousand of them.) And by all my weaknesses, neglects of duty and out-straying's let me not be discouraged to leave off this daily looking to my ways, but to increase my care rather. And wherein so ever I shall see and find, that I have obtained grace in any good sort to be guided by the direction which thy word setteth before me, there I may be joyful and thankful that thou makest any part of my duty easy to me, which I know to have been far otherwise. And thus let me have good proof, that in all the carriage of myself and in every part of my life I am a stranger on earth, as my forefathers were; and lie down in peace at night, even as this morning, through thy goodness, I appear before thy Majesty. And for the nourishing and preserving of this Christian liberty in me, and that I may walk after this direction carefully, let my prayers be oft (as I may be able to offer them) and earnestly continued this day, and watchfulness adjoined thereto, as thou hast taught me: that although this manner of living be not regarded in the world, yet I having obtained of thy Majesty to make it my delight, and knowing the incredible gain that cometh by it, I may be resolute and thoroughly persuaded to make it my practice, not only this day, but every day hereafter wheresoever I shall become, or in what estate and condition soever I shall be. That by the faithful continuance of this Christian course, I may see my

profiting daily in the denying of myself and little esteeming of this world, and so have good testimony that I live by faith: and that when I shall be gray-headed, and wax old, I may have mine old age blessed unto me, and not full of tediousness and weariness, idleness and unprofitableness, waywardness, frowardness and such like annoyances, whiles I acquaint myself now with the renouncing and forsaking my will in these and such like: that thus my latter days may be better than my former. And for the obtaining of grace to the practicing of all duties this day, arm me with the armor of a Christian, that my particular actions may by the help thereof be well ordered: that by the armor of faith I may be able to believe all times, and be kept from doubting and distrust in thee what occasions soever may be offered me of the same; that I standing and abiding in faith constantly, may find and feel the sweet fruit and benefit of that part of my armor: and that I may be so settled in hope, that I may not faint even in straits, though I see no way (to man's reason) of good issue, but by patience may be upholden. That I may so be clothed with the breast-plate of righteousness, that I may not fear any danger by false accusations and malicious tongues; but may bring forth plentifully the fruits of righteousness in all my dealings, and mine innocence may shine as light in the world. That my knowledge, by thy word may direct me to discern good from evil, truth from error, and so may keep my feet from falling, by the deceitfulness of sin. That I being shod with the shoes of peace, may not only have peace of mind in the time of health and prosperity, but be prepared thereby to go on my journey of this life ever, in sickness and tribulation also. And lastly, that I may be so girded about with sincerity and integrity, that I may be far from all hollowness and hypocrisy, and may carry myself in plainness and simplicity throughout. And that behavior in my heart or life which will not stand with this course, let be, as I have prayed, as superfluous rubbish cut off and cast from me, and let me have nothing to do with it, that my life may be free from dangerous

and reproachful evils. And whatsoever else thou knowest expedient for me, bodily or spiritual, in this life or that which is to come, grant it to me for Christ's sake: to whom with thee (O Father) and the holy Ghost, be all honor and glory forever. Amen.

This prayer is not set down to urge any to use it daily, but as any shall see cause; and sometimes to stir up those that feel themselves dead and unfit to pray, by reading it over: and everything in it, so far to be applied, as the state of the person shall require.

The end of the fourth Treatise.

## **THE FIFTH TREATISE,**

SHOWING THE LETS WHICH HINDER THE SINCERE COURSE  
OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BEFORE DESCRIBED.

### **CHAP. 1.**

Of the sum and order of this Treatise, and how it agreeth well with  
the former.

As it is the love of God, which constraineth and enableth us to love him, and therefore to endeavor to obey him; so the wicked who are not beloved of him, cannot love nor serve him: therefore it were infinite, and not to my purpose here, to make a large discourse of this, What lets hinder them from the same, seeing it is no one particularly, but many which hold them from a godly life, as also from faith. But seeing the most of the impediments which hinder them altogether, are also stops and stays to God's dear servants, so that they be not so clear lights in giving good example as they might,

and as were meet for them: therefore for the better furthering of them in the way to a godly life, I will by that occasion lay forth some of them which hinder both: but chiefly I will show how the poor children of God be holden back, and so become more offensive; and give such help as I can against the same: for that is the point which I propound in this Treatise to acquaint the Reader with. And first to say somewhat generally before I proceed.

He that faithfully useth the daily direction set down before, or the like, shall be furnished daily with the munition that a Christian shall need against his greatest enemies, and (as I have said) shall find rest to his soul daily: which otherwise is not to be found nor enjoyed constantly of any, neither the beauty and felicity of a godly life in any sort possessed as it may. For though I dream of no perfection in this life, yet he that walketh in this royal way, shall not doubt where he is, and whether he be out of his way; as other shall from time to time: he shall be accompanied throughout the day and from day today, with faith, hope, love, humility, meekness, righteousness, uprightness, patience, temperancy, somewhat armed against trouble, having the word (according to the measure of his knowledge and faith) ready to guide him what to follow and what to refuse.

Now therefore it might seem needless to say any more about this matter. And indeed this I say, that he who is settled firmly in the practice of that which is before set down, shall find every day less to hinder him than other, and the Christian life more easy to him. But because we are not ignorant of Satan's enterprises (who, as he is first hardly cast out, and with much ado: so he is afterward more fierce and subtle to hinder such as have escaped his hands) therefore I will not bear the reader in hand, that this direction, or the like, will be as easily observed and kept constantly, as read and learned, lest he finding it otherwise, should be discouraged and set further back: but

as I have said of the parts already, with how much ado they shall be practiced; so I say much more of the whole, that seeing it is a chaining up of the unruly thoughts and desires of the heart, it will at the first seem the more difficult. But although they escape that first plunge (I mean, not to renounce and cast off the practice of it altogether through the difficulty and hardness which seemeth to be in it, but will conceive hope that God will strengthen them to abide constantly therein; which is a great conquest:) yet they must know, that there will fall out very many lets to hinder and hold them back one time or other, and one way or other, to make the doctrine which should direct them, without fruit unto them. The devil (as I have said) will lay sundry blocks in their way, to hinder them from going forward in and after this course of living by faith daily.

Besides these, there are some which desire to please God from their hearts though not acquainted with any direction how to be guided, but come far behind them: we must therefore seek, how to prop up and bring on then which are thus weak, as well as give rules to the strong; and endeavor to bring them by little and little to this estate, as well as teach the other how to keep in the good course which they have attained to. Finally, we must in a wise and tender regard of their frailties (as forgetfulness, earthly mindedness, coldness, slothfulness, also of their ignorance and other wants of experience) teach them (as God hath taught us) how to rise when they are fallen, and to come into the way when by occasion they are gone out: that thus they may not be too much dismayed by their infirmities, but rather strongly encouraged to have better acquaintance with the life of a Christian, seeing there are so many helps, means and incitements thereto granted to them by God. Also to make them better see themselves, the vileness which remaineth in them, and Satan's malice and other of his properties, how many things he layeth in their way to make them stumble thereat: that the reading of these may hold them from

security, and from faintness and weariness (in their Christian course) whereto they are most inclined of themselves though they were set forward thereto by no other.

Now although, as oft as a man practiseth not this or the like daily direction, it is certain that he is letted; yet everyone seeth it not to be so by and by, neither how or by what he is letted; much less how to redress it: therefore is this place and treatise of the lets most needful, to show what lets will lie in our way to hold us from following good direction, and from practicing of the Christian life daily; that they being known, may be prevented and avoided, so far as we may have peace, (which shall be, if the rules for directing us be carefully observed:) or at leastwise if we be hindered any manner of way, yet we may see how, and so having remedies at hand, we may be glad to repair speedily unto them, and thereby return into the way again.

And therefore I have thought it expedient to signify the same in this chapter, and that my purpose is, to speak in the whole treatise following, of these and such like matters of purpose, for the help and comfort of such as cannot yet find the Lord's yoke to be easy, nor his commandments pleasant and sweet unto them at one time as another, in one point as in another, but toilsome and burthensome. So that although I have in the first treatise said somewhat particularly for their sakes, as I could take fit occasion to do: yet because I know that many who are willing to live well and Christianly, do make a toil thereof, and do not find any great pleasure in the duties of it; and therefore make question oftentimes (seeing they find it so hard) whether they were best to go forward, or no; especially when they have been driven to commit any shameful sin: therefore I think it very expedient to remove these dangerous thoughts, and show them some way to come out of this uncomfortableness.

Now the main and chief lets are, the devil with all his force, subtlety and malice; and our evil hearts so far as they are unreformed: and by means of both, all things in the world, though not in their own nature, but by then made occasions to us of falling and offending God. Whereby may be gathered, what I mean by lets and hindrances in this treatise, even whatsoever may hold us back from peace with God. Now all these and every of them is able to break off our course in godliness, that we shall not bend our minds otherwise then in some general sort and manner to worship God, and live with men: and although they prevail not so with all, that they break off their course altogether, yet someone part or other of the godly life shall be neglected; and so one day after another, it shall continue with them in such wise, that their rejoicing in the Lord shall fail, neither shall their light shine amongst men, whereby God might be glorified. In this darkness and bondage the most part of God's people are holden: so that although they have some little sight of redemption, and dim hope at sometimes that their sins are forgiven them, yet neither enjoy they their part in this any long time, nor their sweet liberty in godliness, which they should have in all estates; both which the Lord hath granted to enjoy, as I have showed before. They must therefore learn carefully to resist all such lets, as they shall know to stand up in their way to hinder them: of these therefore I mean to give a taste, and of the chief and most of them, that we may see and discern them, and show some help against them.

And first generally I will set down the properties of the devil, as, his malice, subtlety, cruelty and the like, by the which in sundry sort he worketh upon the hearts of poor Christians, and deceiveth them infinite ways: and together with these, I will set down the encouragements which God hath given them against the same, which be far greater than many of them do think.

And secondly, more particularly of the several kinds of lets and hindrances which Satan raiseth up against them; and the kinds of them; and which they be; and how he useth their hearts and the world as his instruments to overthrow them: and the particular remedies against the same, whereby such as are encumbered with any of these lets, may count it no strange thing, neither be dismayed thereat; and by this which they shall read, may be provided of some help and deliverance.

## **CHAP. 2.**

Of Satan's properties and attempts against us in general: and our help against them.

To begin therefore first generally, even he it is, Satan I mean, that withstandeth us in every good thing, (as I have said before) and leadeth us amiss many ways, although we see ourselves set free from the infernal woe. And therefore it is, that our hearts cannot so soon be ranging though it be never so little, but he is ready to meet with them and set them forward in some evil; and by his most sly subtlety, he fasteneth our liking and our affections there, before we can be aware of it: so that we marvel after, to see such a sudden unsettledness in us, and such a change from a well-ordered course wherein we were before. And hereby it is also, (of him I mean) that we can deal about nothing but we may possibly, and be oft times, snared with it: he knowing how to use all outward objects to our hurt, as wealth, beauty, friends, liberty, peace, and all blessings; and contrarily, losses, sickness, disgrace, &c. If that we be at home, he works by domestical affairs: if abroad, he taketh occasion from thence. So that wheresoever, or whatsoever we do or be occupied in, the Scripture teacheth us, that he is about us how good soever we be,



if not in us as in the men of this world: and that which is most dangerous of all, he doth most craftily deceive us when we do least suspect it. More particularly to lay forth this, I cannot here conveniently.

If therefore men be ignorant or inexperienced of his working and properties in themselves, it is not to be marveled at though they bear their deadly wounds about them through his incessant malice and subtlety: for it is not possible, but that every natural man one way or other should be deeply bewitched, made senseless and foolish with pleasures, profits, dreams of earthly happiness to come, fear, security, hard-heartedness, or some such like. And this is the estate of the world at this day; even thus are all unbelievers deceived, and holden (as it were) in bands; and cannot, either seek or desire, or know how to get out. But if any be more expert, and have their hearts exercised in discerning good and evil, and how both are wrought and what hindereth both; if God teach them to know this mystery and secret, of Satan's casting mists before their eyes to rock them fast asleep in sin, and have had proof of these things in themselves; they shall far more easily see into it, and know by the help that God hath left them, how to shun his deadly wounds, and to see his poisoned baits, and to avoid them.

It is not to be denied, but that in this manner, Satan besetteth all people, (though little observed and seen of unbelievers) and most of all, us, whom he is openly and resolutely set against. All of us therefore are to know his enterprises, properties, practices, vigilancy, his malice at all times, and in all actions and companies: and how by his diverse sleights he dealeth according to the occasions offered, and as our weakness may most easily be discouraged. But what then? Are we therefore to faint? God forbid. I say further, (as before) if he doth not only kindle the concupiscence that is within us and our own

lusts, to be more set on fire to do the evil which we are inclined to; but also baiteth the outward things with poison, which we deal about, that he may dazzle our eyes, and cast us from our hold, that is, that we may not keep still in the Christian course: yet ought we not for all this to be dismayed.

For we know, that even these, although they cannot but trouble us for the present time, yet shall turn to our exceeding good, by making us to set more store by God's protection than we did before, and to abide under his government more continually; seeing we do so soon smart when we shake it off (as it were) never so little. When therefore we shall perceive ourselves to be hindered and distracted from our peaceable course and continuance in a daily good course, God would have us know that we should not faint and be discouraged; but in confidence and full persuasion of recovery, and obtaining favor, confess humbly both our wandering and unsettledness of heart, and much more our hearkening to Satan's delusions, (whereby we were so far estranged from God) and forsake them, that we may find mercy.

The Lord would have none of his to be ranging from under his wings, and much less (if any be fallen through infirmity, or beguiled by Satan's subtlety) would he have them think, that he will therefore shake them off: who hath made it manifest and well known in the Gospel: That he seeketh up that which is wandering and lost. This must be thoroughly persuaded unto God's children, that they may neither be discouraged (as they must needs be otherwise) in their falls, from suing to God: and yet, not boldly abusing his lenity, but well encouraged by his great love to return to him again. For although the devil be a mighty enemy and cruel, for which cause he is called A great red dragon; and The accuser of the brethren; and as subtle, vigilant and malicious, as he is strong: yet they for their parts

are not naked and altogether unarmed: neither doth their strength rest in themselves, but they derive and draw it from one that is mightier than he. They have liberty, nay commandment to be strong in the might of God's power, that is: to be fully persuaded, that if there be any strength in God himself, (who we know holdeth all devils in subjection) theirs it is, and for them, and they may take it for their own: even as if any poor man in a purchase should have by a rich friend laid out for him and freely bestowed on him, whatsoever he should want. Yea, one part of their armor (I mean faith) is able alone to overcome all lets which they shall meet with, and to thrust back even the fiery darts of the devil, which burn and sting most sharply.

They must also consider, who and what manner persons they are; not enemies to God as in times past, but beloved, dear and precious unto him, even sons and daughters; and therefore not like to be unnaturally forsaken or left to themselves in their need and necessity: and if when they were enemies they were reconciled by his death, how much more being reconciled, shall they be saved by his life? And being already delivered from the greatest fear, that is, of damnation, they may be well persuaded, that the combats which remain to be betwixt Satan and them, cannot be deadly and to their overthrow, but to exercise their faith; that after they have trusted God a little and waited upon him, to see his helping hand here, they may after their conflicts receive their reward.

This I speak not to make any slack and careless, but to encourage them against these lets which follow, which by his subtlety shall seem greater than they are: that they may not be faint-hearted and discomfited, seeing there is no cause. For it hath pleased the Lord and so he hath promised, by striving, resisting Satan, and suffering a little, afterwards to take them into glory: (as our Savior himself did

go that way, Heb. 12:2.) and yet not to be without honor, even here (if we judge rightly) where and whiles (to the judgment of the flesh) they are in the midst of reproach. This caveat I give unto the believers beforehand, putting them in remembrance that I must oftentimes call them back to the consideration thereof: that they may be upholden in the greatest likelihoods of danger.

And they must be warned to learn wisdom by their experience, that when they shall be able in sundry trials to escape and be delivered from the foil and peril which they feared, and to see that God hath upholden them therein by faith in his promise and hope in his help, and that thereby they have been taught to use such means as have brought a good end of their conflicts; they may afterwards be emboldened to wait for the same grace again, in the like necessities and straits: and so to grow to have that acquaintance and communion with God, that they may with confidence look to obtain greater things at his hands then these, and to encourage and hearten on others (who are weak) to do the same.

Now if any should fear, that all this looking to ourselves is more than needs: he is to know, that if our hearts were sound, and so kept without liking of evil (as sometime the meanest Christian feeleth it,) there were no danger to be feared, no not from the devil himself, much less the world, according to that of Solomon: Keep thy heart with all diligence, for thereout cometh life: and they who have any experience, find nothing more true, then that they walk at great liberty, when their hearts are well ordered. But seeing few can hear this saying, that our hearts should be holden in subjection to God's will from time to time, and our desires and thoughts (though fond and foolish) captivated; therefore Satan taketh his advantage thereby, to make them slaves and bondmen to his suggestions and deceitful enticements, to bereave and make them void of all sound

judgment; and thus, to come to do those things which sometimes they were ashamed of, or at least have judged very hardly of others for doing them.

And thus it cometh to pass, that besides the hindrance we have by our evil hearts, when we shall have considered and well pondered how many ways the devil letteth and hindereth us, we shall see good cause to provide the strongest help and defense that we can against the same. Now then, that it may more clearly be seen, what danger and fear we are in by him, which may easily break off our course in godliness; some of his bad sleights and practices are more particularly to be laid forth, which though they be many and diverse, yet may be fitly drawn to these two heads: Either they do all set against our faith; or else directly aim at the extinguishing and burying of godly life in us: wherein if the devil can prevail against us, he hath gotten what he would, and we have lost that wherein our glory stood.

### **CHAP. 3.**

Of the devils troubling the weak believer about his faith: and if he do not prevail against him one way, he seeketh by another.

And first for the former, to declare how he troubleth the weak faith of God's children (for I omit to show, how he leadeth them captives who are in his snares, being taken prisoners of him to do his will, and how forcibly he holdeth back such as do but begin to look after eternal life; that they shall be long in cheaping but never buying, although it be without money:) his malice, cruelty and diligence do evidently appear in the new borne Christians, which are made the children of God by faith; as S. John saith: The dragon made war with the remnant of the woman's seed which keep the commandments of

God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. How many heavy discouragements he presseth down their weak faith withal, that they may shake it off utterly, and be persuaded infinite times that they have none at all, Christ's words to Peter do prove, saying: Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to winnow you, that is: to scatter and cast you out. And how mightily he prevaieth with many for a season so far, that they are altogether in a manner without comfort, the dispersed Churches in the Apostles time knew then, and they now know best who have felt and found it so.

Also it would hardly be believed, if both Scripture and experience were not clear witnesses in this behalf, how he terrifieth them with their own wants, ignorance's, infirmities and unworthiness's: also with fear of shameful falls, which it seemeth to them that they are unlike to avoid; and the rather when he brings to their remembrance such good servants of God, as have fallen in the like manner before them.

Besides these, what unsettling's doth he work in them whiles he feareth them with this, that for all their care they shall never hold out in their faith and holy course of life unto their end; but by persecutions, and other afflictions, which shall be stirred up against them, or by other provocations they shall be turned back? All which with many other, he oppresseth them with: and all to the end they may cast away their hope and confidence, and conclude resolutely, that they have no faith. The which though the sleepy and drowsy professors are not moved with: yet with his weak children it so prevaieth, that they have no greater affliction. And in that our Savior himself was mightily set upon by him about this thing, Whether he were the son God or no: what other thing did it signify then this, that none of us should easily attain to this honor, to know ourselves to be

the children of God and rest quietly therein, but we should find Satan (our adversary) a most mighty hinderer of us in our going about it?

For wherein can he show his malice more fully, or verify the Scripture more clearly, which saith: That he is envious man? And again: That there shall be enmity betwixt the seed of the woman and the Serpent, and that he should tread upon his heel? Indeed, this is to be granted, that even their weak faith which they have, is sweet unto them; and God doth sometime show them, how happy a thing it is to be in his favor and freed from condemnation, Saint John thus speaking to them: I write unto you that believe, that you may know ye have eternal life. And by reason of the little taste and fruit of their weak faith, God so upholdeth them, that they can never be contented to forgo it: and therefore would they most chiefly be occupied in thinking of it, to nourish and strengthen it (if they knew how and were able) as being their chief treasure.

But the devil knoweth, that there are all those ways which I have before spoken of, and many other, to dismay them and trouble their minds about the same; and that their weakness is easily wrought upon, (for he watcheth his best opportunity) whereby he may drive them into fear, doubting, heaviness and such like. And the want of outward blessings in many doth much increase it, from the which they shall never be free long together, but every while be troubled, till they grow better acquainted with the nature and property of God's promises, namely, how true, unchangeable, and perpetual they be; even as God himself also is: also except they prize them above all other things, and send up earnest prayers to God daily and oft for this faith to be rooted in them: which they must do most willingly and gladly, as in the first treatise I admonished, that it being more and more daily settled in their hearts, they may feel their doubting and fear to vanish as fast, as they perceive their hold in the promises

of God to wax stronger: and by those means, by which I taught the weak believer there to strengthen his faith, let him look to be upholden against the lets which I have mentioned before, or any other whatsoever may trouble him.

It is also to be granted, that God doth ordinarily stablish men's faith the sooner and more easily by the clear, sound, and most skillful and wise applying of God's promises by his Ministers and messengers, whom he appointeth to that work: (and as this is done more weakly and darkly, the greater and longer is their combat and conflict:) but how clear and plain soever the will of God about our salvation be to us, who have experience of the truth which is taught us; yet it is not so by and by to them who do but newly embrace this glad tidings, although they would most gladly enjoy the same. How much more then, when they are yet but weakly grounded, and in this estate do want an able ministry to set them forward: (which is many poor Christians case:) alas, how much more (I say) must they needs be kept long at one stay, or (which is worse) forget and loose the hold which once they had?

But although they be free from this danger; yet the devil working upon their infirmities, casteth many more mists before their eyes then we can reckon up, whereby he keeps them under. Yet all this is done by the most wise providence of God, disposing even these hindrances which Satan layeth in their way, to the most earnest stirring up of them to fasten and lay hold on his mercy; besides the which, they see nothing but deadly unquietness. And this use all such weak ones are to make of their doubting, fear of condemnation, and the trouble of mind which goeth with it: and therefore to give daily attendance upon the ministry of the word, which doth help to supply that which is wanting in their faith: to receive help privately of their teachers, and others who are experienced; and as well themselves to



use daily to meditate upon God's promises, as also to pray oft and earnestly to God that nothing may hold them back or be a let from safe resting upon the same; especially seeing their hearts are so set upon and possessed with the love and desire thereof, that nothing can satisfy them without it. For do they not see, by all that hath been said to this purpose from the first entering into this matter, that they are the persons to whom Christ saith: Believe? And again: Seek and ye shall find? And also to whom he saith: I came not to break the bruised reed, nor to quench the smoking flax? Yea they are those to whom he speaketh, as he did to Peter: I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and to whom he saith: Seeing ye thirst after the water of life, I will give it you. But if they be stayed by these means in time, (as it is the thing to the which they must come) and be upholden thereby, the Lord so blessing them; yet the devil giveth them not over, even then, as though he were vanquished and overcome. For the present time indeed, he being thus resisted, flieth from them (as Saint James saith) having done his best, and yet hath not prevailed against them: which to their singular comfort they may observe, that this their experience may bring them sure hope of victory again in the like conflict. But (as I said) he hath not given them over, as though he feared they were too mighty for him: but departeth for a little season, as it is written; that as one taking breath, or gathering new strength, yea rather as one chafed, he cometh more eagerly and fierce afterwards. Now, if he can drive them from their hold; the discomfort which they take thereby, doth weaken that courage and labor to be well governed in their lives, which was in them before, how small and weak soever it seemed to them to be: and therefore they that have such tender consciences, and being (as I may rightly term them) bruised reeds, to the end they may not be broken and so holden back from their cheerful proceeding in the true service of God, must thus be stayed up (as I have said) and recover themselves from time to time, even as oft as they shall be assaulted and

discouraged. And this, with that which I said in the first treatise, may (through God's blessing) be a remedy to the weak ones in such a case.

Now if by God's blessing and their diligence, they find some stay to their faith, and rest to their soul thereby; and then become more secure by reason of their former good success (as it is too common a thing, that God's children shall soon wax too secure, and void of that serpent-like wisdom till they have been taught by longer experience:) let them know, that he watcheth his opportunity to set upon them some other way; and namely, to draw them to presumption and too bold trusting in God without certain ground of his promise: and he taketh occasion thus to do, from their former believing in God, and leaning to his favor in time past when they sped so well thereby. This subtlety is so secretly wrought, that they shall hardly perceive, yea or so much as suspect the same, especially having small knowledge and being uncircumspect in observing their thoughts and ways. And whiles they think their estate to be right happy and good, they are led through this boldness into some evil: as, into privy pride, or a good opinion of themselves, &c. sleight and negligent use of means public or private; and thereupon, an adventuring perhaps to do that which is shameful and reproachful to them.

This the devil did hope to bring our Savior Christ unto, when he saw his firm confidence which he had in his Father, at his first tempting him to distrust: for then he persuaded him upon the hope he had in God, to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and not to fear any danger. But though he found no such thing in him as he looked for; yet in Peter, he assaying the same, was not disappointed. For he having with great commendation made profession of his faith, was too presumptuously carried immediately to give counsel to his master (which boldness was intolerable) but such counsel as tended

to his dishonor, and our utter undoing if it had been yielded unto, namely: Not to give himself for the sins of the world; for the which cause he was reprov'd and repell'd, and that most justly, with the name of Satan, for that he had in that action so rightly resembled Satan, who had thrust him forward unto such great boldness.

And do not many by the like occasion fall and offend dangerously? As, because they are the children of God, and for that they trust in him, and therefore knowing and confessing that they are beloved of him, they hope he will not suffer them to fall greatly, but will keep them though they see not how? They are persuaded (although falsely and amiss) that the things which they do in ignorance and unbelief, are yet to be allowed and commended in then because they mean no evil; and being (as I said) beloved of God, they presume above that which they ought; and that they may promise much to themselves (that they are privileged from offending) because there is somewhat in them more then in others. Yea, when men grow to have any hold of the assurance of God's mercy, it is little known of many, how the devil taketh occasion from that which is good, yea the best thing in them, to hold them back from honoring God (in such sort as his children should do:) but keepeth them in blindness, that they shall not see that to be evil which they do, though it be very offensive and palpable.

For would it be thought, that such might be brought to be so blinded in that which they do, as to think, that if their course be not liked (when it is indeed justly to be misliked) nor their opinions approved though they be fond and unsound, yet that they are hardly dealt withal of those which think so of them? And thus it cometh to pass, that many dare be bold to neglect good means publicly and privately; or to use both very negligently, slightly and unreverantly, which sometime they durst not do; and to make light account of a sin in

word or deed, which sometime they would not allow so much as in thought. And thus many private men take upon them to expound the Scriptures, having no gifts of interpretation, tongues or knowledge thereto; because they think that the children of God may and should do so. Such dreams and fantastical pangs Satan raiseth in the hearts as well of such as have had some taste and feeling of God's favor, as of others who have gone about the same (foolish flesh too easily liking of, and consenting thereto:) that if Christ be with them, and God love them, under that color all should be borne with that they do. Wherein who seeth not that Satan driveth at this, that their profession may be made ridiculous among other, and they themselves after some sore foil, may be discouraged from their profession altogether. I must needs say it is lamentable, that such as God hath enlightened sometimes with some sure hope of his favor and of the life to come, should so be deceived and made to degenerate: but yet that it may be so, by Satan's malicious and subtle undermining of those which are not settled and constant, the oft rehearsing of such offenses in Peter by name, and in other of the chiefest Apostles, doth plainly prove; although it is greatly to their shame, and little to their comfort which are in this estate: neither shall they need to glory much or please themselves therein; because such as have attained to greater grace than they, are no other way but by the power of God's spirit guiding their hearts, preserved from such like offenses.

But this I have spoken first, that I may admonish those who have found themselves delivered from the fear of God's wrath sometimes; yet, to beware of all boldness and presumption in the least manner, and to look carefully to the preserving and maintaining of their faith by all means, and learn to live by it while they have God's word a light to their steps: for by it they abide in God's favor, and are further upholden in their Christian course; and without it, if they will be bold

to venture as little children without a stay, they shall soon see to their cost what danger they may grow unto.

Secondly, that they may advisedly consider (their faith and confidence assuring them of so great good things from God daily) that this love of God constraineth them to give themselves over to God as they are able: and therefore in reverence and holy fear to carry themselves so, as they have the word a lantern and light to their steps, and to suspect all other boldness to be rash presumption; which the Devil according to his wonted manner and custom laboreth to draw them into, that he may hinder them as much as he can, from enjoying the full fruit of their faith here, although he cannot altogether deprive them of salvation itself. In humility let them think basely of themselves, that they may keep far from this bold presumption.

And let not this be spoken to the weak Christians only, although they are most easily deceived thus for want of knowledge or sound experience: but let the best also know, that it falleth out oft times in one hour or day, when men wax somewhat more careless in upholding faith and a good conscience, which cometh not to pass in many years. And for such as are in fear and danger of this, let them know, that the greatest measure of faith doth bring answerable measure of humility, and teacheth such to fear their own infirmities and Satan's cruelty, and to observe themselves lest they fall; and hast not, no not in the smallest manner, to lay hold of Christ's mercy while they walk presumptuously: and so afterward let them keep well when they are well, rather than boldly to tempt God by doing the contrary. And this let all such take for their remedy against that subtlety of the Devil in drawing them to presumption.

## **CHAP. 4.**

## Of Satan's hindering the continuance of faith.

And thus I pass to another of his sly and malicious practices, beside tempting of us to utter unbelief and presumption. For if he prevail against us neither of both these ways, but that we set ourselves as we have been taught, to uphold and prop up our weak faith daily; yet he doth most strongly assault us, watching all opportunities thereto, that we may not be rooted and stablished therein; that after much labor and many prayers we shall be doubting from time to time, and held back from daily nourishing and preserving the continuance of that heavenly gift, that we should not live by it, nor grow more sound and experienced in it, after we have once obtained it of God: which caused the Apostles to pray thus, though Christ was conversant with them: Lord increase our faith. And although we be commanded never to cast away our confidence, nor to come to prayer or any other duty at any time without this our faith; but as oft as we pray in the day to be able to call God Father, and not to be unarmed of that whiles we be in this warfare: yet because it is the preserver of our life and peace, and that whereby all the benefits of Christ are conveyed unto us throughout our life, therefore doth he hold the most of them which have enjoyed it and felt the sweetness of it, from possessing it daily. And he maketh that as harsh and strange to many even of God's servants to hear, That the righteous live by faith; and when they have buried and lost the power and operation of it, that their life is no life to be accounted of: even as it is strange to the most of the unbelievers, to hear, That we must draw near to God with the assurance of faith at any time or at all.

And from hence it is, that among holy Christians, (though weak I must needs say) these speeches are heard: What must we ever believe, and daily hold our faith? As though this were a matter not heard of, and a speech doubtful: when yet the Scripture showeth

plainly, that we must walk from faith to faith daily; and that, not only to more assurance of justification, but to a greater measure of sanctification also: that our life may be a living by faith, according to that which the Apostle saith to the Galatians: In that I now live (in the flesh in this mortal body) I live by faith in the son of God, who hath loved me and given himself for me. By the which words it is manifest, that in his own person he showeth how the faithful being united to Christ by faith, do thereby draw and (as it were) suck spiritual grace from him daily, whereby they live, that is to say, lead a spiritual life, or rather Christ liveth in them.

Now therefore if the justification of God's people, and the holiness which they show forth in their lives, do arise from hence, that they believe God hath promised them strength to wait for salvation and to live well: then it must needs follow, that faith failing, men's strength to the doing of any good thing utterly faileth also. And therefore if we be persuaded, after we have once received grace to believe, that we are thereby well enough, though we labor not to grow daily, and to hold fast thereby the hope of forgiveness of our sins, and of other grace; how grossly doth the Devil bewitch us? By what means soever he do it, whether by keeping us ignorant of this truth; or otherwise busieth and occupieth us in the world, that we think not of it, nor at all look after it; or whether we be holden from it any other way: all as one. And although this is a thing, with which men of the world are not acquainted, yet they who have learned to know what the excellency of believing is, and have felt any power of it working in them; they are to know that they can neither live comfortably, nor do anything well without it: for without faith it is impossible to please God.

And as the people of Israel in that one part of their life daily rose up persuaded, that the walls of Jericho should fall after God had

foretold it them; and for proof thereof did every day compass them, blowing trumpets of rams horns, as they had been commanded: so in our longer conflict not with Jericho but with him, who is called the Prince of the world, this our faith is to lie down with us, and to rise up with us, and through the day to accompany us. And nothing is more to be lamented then this: that though it be rare and seldom found in the earth (the Devil holding men in unbelief strongly, as it were in bands) yet it is not wanted or once missed: and the godly themselves (for the most part of them) scarcely have any great use of it, in respect of that which they might have. Neither is this point made so familiar and well known to many Christians, who yet have a long time embraced the Gospel even with good liking, (though some of greater experience are better settled.) Neither do many of them grow to see that their life is a continual and daily conflict with sin and distrust; neither are they acquainted with the subtle sleights of the Devil, how covertly he bringeth to pass, that they forget they are purged from their sins, and therefore led after other deceitful allurements in the world. I speak it for that I see, how hardly they can be holden in the daily strengthening and nourishing of their faith, who yet have truly (though weakly) tasted how sweet it is, and Christ thereby, through the preaching of the Gospel. And no marvel, if they cannot be brought as some others are (and yet they but weak also) to set their delight therein as in the best treasure.

And for that so few are to be found, who having had comfort by it twenty or thirty years ago, when they first heard of it and received it; or in later years, as many (it is not to be doubted) have also had (for I dare not be so uncharitable as to judge otherwise of them:) for that such (I say) who have enjoyed much comfort by it, do not now; nor have since that, enjoyed the same still: what is the cause of it? Is it any other then this (that for sundry years past, and now also, they have so sleight fruit of it) that Satan hath stolen away their hearts



after the love of present things everyone his way, and caused them to lose that high estimation of the Gospel which once they had of it (though they still commend it;) they not wise enough in the mean while to observe, how they were deceived and blindfolded by him; nor once to miss or complain of their loss whiles they may live at ease, and prosper on earth in the mean while. And that it hath been thus with many, (& therefore also is so with others still) hereby it hath appeared, that at their death they recovered their decayed faith: and sundry have more deeply descended into themselves then of late before they had done, and have called to remembrance the seasons in which they had rejoiced through their faith in another manner then in their latter days; much bewailing also the loss of so great a benefit as they by the decay of it had so long time sustained, even great liberty of mind to walk with God, and that boldness and freedom of good conscience, which the wise man saith is a continual feast. Such therefore as see what the devil pulleth from them by darkening and burying this sure trust and confidence in God, and how it goeth from then covertly as the Sun from her line, before they be aware if it be not well looked to: such (I say) must learn to put themselves forth, and consider what strong hold they have (& they must stick to it) when they may say: The Lord is my helper, whom then shall I fear? And again: I should utterly have fainted, but that I believe verily, &c. Such must learn of God's servants to wax more bold with reverence, and resolute: and seeing as David saith, Our fathers trusting in thee, were not confounded, therefore to cry: Though thou kill us, yet will we trust in thee. And such must leave that worldly wisdom, whereby they thought it needless and foolish to nourish it in themselves daily; and must become fools in the estimation of men, that they may be wise by the testimony of God, to keep their faith as they would their life; and that, by oft recourse had to the Lord's promises which fail not, neither change; provoked thereto by their daily infirmities and wants, thinking oft and much of then, and praying for grace to apply

them to themselves, and growing stronger by experience: that thus they may clearly see God's loving kindness daily to them, and not at someone time only, and that so they know themselves to be in continual safety thereby, as their hearts desire; which is to set the Lord always before them, that they may not be shaken: so shall they not be snared in Satan's bands, as otherwise they must needs be, neither greatly fall (I mean, to their hurt) although they be not free from temptation. These are the chief hinderances of faith, whereby the devil troubleth God's servants, holding some in fear that they have none at all, who yet sometime have felt the contrary: drawing others to presume, &c. and keeping others from confirming it and growing therein daily, whether we respect faith in the particular promises of this life, or of life eternal. And these last mentioned, though they are not said properly, to presume as the former, yet (as it is hard to hold any good thing long) they letting loose their hearts, and being much occupied in the world, and having many dealings, being also in many companies, and meeting with many crosses, (besides their own forgetfulness and frailty) are darkened and distracted in themselves; and not being fervent and diligent in using good means, do doubt and fear. And this is the estate of many, and those of long profession under the Gospel. Which sort of people till they settle themselves constantly to walk with God, and will be content to keep a narrow watch over their hearts and lives, can be at no better stay. For by these means they preserve their faith, and keep peace with God ordinarily, as we see by experience: or easily recover themselves again, if they be dimmed and over-shadowed.

## **CHAP. 5.**

Of Satan's hindering the believer from living godly: and how many ways; and namely, by keeping him in a wandering and unsettled

course; and also of the remedy against it: and first by occasion of that, how he holdeth back the wicked.

Now it followeth that it be likewise showed, how he letteth the believers from a godly life: so that even good Christians and they who fear God, shall yet be kept back from many duties, which both they would do, and are heavy and wounded for not doing them; he deceiving them with some sins which do afterward fill them with deadly discouragement. But because there are some who are holden under of dangerous and damnable lets, and yet think themselves the people of God: for discovering of such, by the way before I speak of the impediments which hinder God's children, I will (as I promised) briefly set down some of those lets whereby he hindereth such altogether from practicing a godly life, though they think themselves sound Christians, and yet are not, but do lie: that they may glory in themselves no further than they have cause, that is, nothing at all; but may know that they who are letted by these, are not godly; and that true Christians indeed, may know, that though they are sundry ways letted, yet not like them.

Now these have an heart long accustomed to evil, (which were not hard for them to see, if they would enter into the sifting of it:) and by means of this, they cannot give themselves over to be ready to do God's will in one thing as in another, but think it foolishness to do so: and the best of these do but perform some outward task of prayer and confession of their sins, for fashion or fear or some such like cause; but not looking for any strength thereby, to be any whit the more godly; neither in their actions will be tied to be otherwise directed, then as seemeth good to themselves.

Again they neither attain to sound and clear sight of the forgiveness of their sins, neither will they labor for it by applying to themselves

the promises of God, but hope their state is good without that; so that their life, when they be at the best, is but a bold presuming of God's mercy, without any warrant: and therefore either in that false confidence they die, whose estate (yet) cannot be good; or else when it pleaseth God to awake them out of that spiritual sleep, they confess the truth plainly that they are in woeful estate. And therefore they are unwilling to enter into consideration of the annoyances which sin bringeth: but if they do, yet it shall not touch nor greatly trouble them, neither will they try to the full which of their actions be sins, but they have soon done with such matters, though they be never weary of that which likes them. I speak of the forwardest sort of them which are unrenewed.

Neither are they long persuaded, save only in their good mood which lasteth not, that the godly life is the only happy life; that is, to live as I have described it; namely, to have our conversation in heaven, and to mind such things especially above all other, whiles we are abiding here on earth: but are strongly settled in this opinion, for the most part, that their own (though all may see upon how weak ground) is the best course, when yet daily care of holiness is irksome to them, and that all such as go further then they, are but precise and foolish and full of fantasies (for so are they for the most part accounted of, who in particular draw the rules of religion into practice;) and yet they do not so easily rest herein, but oft their conscience (will they, nill they) telleth them, that the godly life is best.

To conclude, either they are snared in sects and opinions above their reach (which cannot stand with godliness:) or else they are so ignorant of the will of God in the Scriptures, that if they had no other encumbrance, that were enough to hinder them from so much as entering into a godly course: or so hollow, loose-minded and willful,

that none can persuade them to do better. And therefore, what the comfort of such is, may be easily conjectured.

These, (that I rehearse no more, which are infinite) yea, even some of them are sufficient hindrances from a godly life, in whom soever they be found: so that, although the most will put themselves forth for godly, yet being branded with any of these marks of Satan, they shall sufficiently be known to be far off from such as they would be taken for, namely, true Christians. For remedy, such as are willing to seek after any, I refer them to the first Treatise of this book: wherein I have showed what way such should take to be delivered out of their misery.

Now I will proceed to set down the lets, whereby God's children are holden from practicing the godly life. And seeing many weak Christians can easilier tell that they are hindered from it, then they can tell what hindereth them, as it is in bodily sickness: I will therefore lay open some of the lets, whereby the Devil doth chiefly stay and hold them back from going forward; and direct such as are troubled with them, how they may in some sort be helped against the same. And these generally are three, (to the which the particulars shall be referred.) For either the Devil keepeth them in the wanting of some good things, without which they cannot constantly proceed in a godly life: or he presseth them down with some evil things, as inward or outward sins, which take away their courage from godliness: or else unsettleth them so by occasion of things lawful, that they are holden thereby from a Christian life.

Of the first sort I set down especially three: (for I do not undertake to mention all particulars, which were infinite) the rest will be discerned more easily by these. The first is, when the Devil holdeth us out of a settled course in godliness which all the godly ought to

live in daily, though he cannot break it off altogether. The second is the want of our first love, though we hold and keep some course in godliness more than many do. The third is, want of a sufficient ministry, though we be troubled with neither of the two former.

If these three be not in our way, I see not much which may greatly hinder us. For if we be resolved to consecrate ourselves wholly to God while we live; and endeavor to nourish and preserve that fervency which at our first calling God wrought in us, so that such holy sparkles be not quenched; and then that we have the word of God ordinarily to blow up and cherish the same: doubtless, we are in the safest and best way to live happily that in this life can be enjoyed: although all have not the like measure of grace and experience, by means whereof it cannot be alike with all, though they be void of these fore-mentioned lets, (as I shall have occasion to show after) namely, what trouble and disquietness the Devil raiseth in some weak, yet dear servants of God, by occasion of some want of graces in them which others have.

But while I show how the Devil hindereth us, I do not mean that he hath any absolute power or authority of himself, but as God giveth it him for the trial of his, and the punishment of his enemies: but the power which he giveth him, he doth most cruelly, subtly and maliciously exercise with all diligence, that he may deceive even the best, and so destroy them if it were possible. Neither let any ask how he can thus deceive and bewitch us? For the ground of all temptations being our own weakness, he being a spirit hath access unto our spirits to trouble them: and through long experience knowing our nature, and practicing our misery from age to age, he is able with ease to work our annoyance in all respects.

And this giveth him knowledge of our minds more fully, who understandeth the same by the least show and inclination of our affection and will; not that he knoweth our hearts perfectly, (for that is proper to God only) but by his long acquaintance with our nature from Adam to this day: this maketh him not only to expect any outward signification of speech or gesture to conceive our intents and purposes by; but also out of our universal corruption (whereof he hath continual proof) to discover the vanity of our minds, and the thoughts of our hearts: which after he hath found, he setteth us forward (as he seeth occasion whereto we must incline) to disobey God and his holy commandments.

But I will return to the lets whereby the Devil deceiveth the simple, that they shine not as lights to honor their profession in a godly life. The first of the three (I said) is by holding them from being settled in a holy course. As for example: he so handleth the matter, that many true hearted Christians shall not know how, or not think it meet, to tie themselves to any rules or order of passing the day and leading their life, but walk (as it falleth out) with some general care, and a good meaning at some time; whereas the Scripture teacheth us to be directed particularly in our thoughts, words and deeds touching every commandment, that our whole conversation may beseem the Gospel. Now therefore if we pass the day, and look not before us what we go about, that we may be carried with care for the right performing of our duties; who seeth not, that even this one is a sufficient let to him who is holden under of it, as not being able to answer for many of his actions done to the offense of God and men in the day, as he might have been? For in that experience which I have, I cannot say that this one let is removed from very many, even of those which give good hope that they would do well; and therefore it blemisheth many of their actions.

Some do propound to themselves a course of passing their time and framing of their lives in some points commendably, (as for example: in their calling to be occupied in some labor) but do not religiously behave themselves therein, showing patience where they ought and as they have occasion, nor justice and innocence, and so walk in the fear of God; and therefore do not find the sweetness which a godly life yieldeth, whereas that were a right and good directing of them: but herein they rather follow the example of others in thinking they do well, then are led by any commandment of God, or warrant of his word; and therefore they not wisely foreseeing how many ways the Devil will go about to hinder them even in that, are soon broken off from that good purpose which they made, and are unsettled again: whether it be by their ignorance and folly, or pretense of other occasions; whatsoever was the mean thereof, the Devil was the worker of it.

They are no wiser nor deserve any greater commendation then the former, who at sometimes and for a season keep and observe such order and direction to lead their lives by, as they have learned out of the holy Scriptures; but by little and little they fall to do it in a slight and common manner, even for fashion in great part, and rather through custom and for shame (and so wax soon weary) then with delight and comfort: and all because their hearts go not with their actions constantly, neither do they regard or look to their consciences in one thing as in another, that they may be kept in peace. In all which though they cannot so much be blamed for any great evil they do, yet their inconstancy in declining so soon from their good beginnings, is no small blemish in them, although they lie not long therein. Whereby who doth not see that the Devil watcheth them narrowly, that he may spoil them of their liberties and bring them into sore dangers; although few of them give themselves to know by whom this is wrought, neither mark what letted them, or



put them out of their course, much less prevent or resist them? Nay, which is more to be marveled at, some are so grossly deceived by him, that they are not grieved (for the time) that they were letted, but glad to have excuses for their breaking out. Again, when they are distempered in their course and fallen into evil thereby, yet know they not how to recover, but fall further; or be afraid to go about their recovery. Some, when God giveth them an inkling of his displeasure, yet go forward till he strike them with more main blows; and then they become blockish under great afflictions: as we read of Jonah, when he fell asleep notwithstanding his sin, after he was told of the great danger which did then hang over him.

These and such like, whiles they are secretly brought upon the people of God, do they not (think we) manifestly prove that Satan hath beguiled them? And whiles he bringeth them to this point, doth he not greatly deface the beauty of a godly life in them? Do not some of them fear, that they are departed from God utterly, no more to return, though this (I say) should not be? And they who go not so far from sound judgment, are they not yet much appalled? Where is their former peace and spiritual rejoicing in God their portion? What is become of their constancy in watchfulness, and holy care? Where is their strong confidence which they should not cast away? Their fervent prayers, their fruitfulness in sundry duties when they feel themselves neither fit to be in company, nor to be occupied in their calling, nor without danger to be alone by themselves? I think these are the fruits of lamentable wants in such good things as sometime they enjoyed: and not bare wants; for such shall the best of us have whiles we live, and yet not be without peace, nor unsettled: but these which I have spoken of, both unsettle and distemper them whom the Devil oppresseth with them. So that it may truly be said, that this is one special kind of lets whereby he hindereth the going forward of God's people, even in holding them from constancy and

steadfastness in living godly from day today, and from renewing their covenant with God from time to time: without which grace it is not possible for them to be free from sore blemishes, and inward vexation, and outward reproach thereby, which the beloved of the Lord should be far from. And although through God's tender kindness, (whereby he keepeth them that they be not utterly forsaken, and will keep them to the end) although (I say) through this goodness of God, all these turn to their good; yet that is not long of them or of their security and sleight serving of God, the Devil intending no other thing thereby but the dishonor of God and their overthrow. If any shall say, There are none but go aside these ways: I answer, It is therefore the more necessary that we should be warned thereof, and fenced against them. And by this it may appear, what a main let and hindrance this is to God's people from a Christian life: to be destitute of direction how to please God, and thereby to be unsettled and wander in their course of living, as though there were no certain way appointed them of God.

The remedy to all these is appointed by God, and brought to light by his word, and enjoyed and practiced of sundry of his faithful servants, who were sometime kept void of it by the envious man, as even many thousands of them are still by his malice deprived thereof unto this day. And this remedy is, first that we suffer ourselves easily to be persuaded that all our speeches in the commendation of a godly life in general, are but wind, except we faithfully endeavor to bring it into practice every day; and therefore provide (as we may be taught) and that above all other things, to give to every part of the day some duty; or when we be weakest, that we mind no evil, (as in the former Treatise of my book I have proved) seeing the Lord in appointing the day to the several actions which are to be done in it, doth not pass by and omit these (wherein men think they have greatest liberty to forget God) namely, eating and drinking; but yet with them

extendeth his charge to all other things also, saying: Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do else, let all be done to the praise of God. Is it not for this cause, that we are rebuked of our Savior, saying: The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, &c. namely, for our improvident and shiftless regard of our growing on in a Christian course to heavenward; when yet the men of the world, if they be disappointed of their earthly commodities one way, will shift for them another? If we find this impossible in all points, shall we therefore yield and give place, and seek shelter for our untoward hearts, which would do no more in the service of God, then we have done in times past? Or shall we aim unto no further perfection then we list? And if there be hardness in practicing some part of Christian duties at the beginning, yet let there be no resistance against it, but our wants acknowledged, that we may see the greater cause to grow forward: yea, and know we, that the work that we have every day to do, even our chiefest and only work is, to see God truly served and honored of us in one thing or other.

For such as cannot better direct themselves, I have endeavored to be some help unto them in the former treatise, until a perfecter may be come by. This or any other which thou approvest in thy conscience, use reverently and acquaint thyself with it, and thou shalt find it sweet and gainful: leave not off the practicing of the rules of it, or the like, by little and little; for then shalt thou never gather any sound experience of the good that is gotten thereby; but as thou mayest, observe it better and better, and so become more expert in it: so doing although thou shouldest sometime be turned out of the way, yet thou shalt by one part or other of it, learn how to return again. For doth a man go out of the way, and not return again? Yea, tie thyself resolutely to a daily walking with God in faithfulness, for it is as a watch tower to keep from danger, and as a hand continually to

hold up from falling: and constantly give credit unto him, that as he hath promised to his, rest with himself forever; so he will also keep them by his power to the day of resurrection.

This confidence being preserved, and hearty prayer oft used, and watchfulness against thine especial infirmities, with oft and due considering what a precious treasure this course of life is, shall preserve thee against this wandering course which Satan intendeth to bring thee into; by which thou shalt be unsettled in the serving of God, the least evil whereof, is unquietness of mind, or idleness and unsettledness, if not hardness of heart. These remedies the better and longer time that thou hast had experience of, the more thou shalt perceive the devils force to be weakened towards thee: and thou canst not be greatly endangered, except thou beest slothful in exercising of them.

And that do they prove unto us, who although they are not altogether void of them, yet they think it too much to make them daily armor unto them; alleging for themselves, that this is even to deny to Christians the liberty which God hath given them. And therefore at this stay they keep, and will not be drawn from it, till God bewray to them more clearly the devils subtlety in holding them there, and what they have lost by the hot maintaining of their vain liberties; that which they lose for them, being far more precious: and how for want of daily and more hearty embracing of these good means, they are driven by experience to see and confess, that they were kept long in bondage.

If therefore through our neglect of these we be otherwise fallen into Satan's hands then we were wont, there is no other remedy but that we bear our punishment for a season, even heaviness and reproach, because we have sinned: but although we have thus fallen, yet let us

rise again, and that betimes: for he hath smitten us, and he will heal us. Let us not harden our hearts against God when he hath so justly chastised us, but as humble children, let every of us say: My father, my father, we are ashamed that we have turned aside from thee: for why should we provoke our God any while, after we once see his frowning face beginning to arise upon us, we being his sons and daughters, unless we think it a small thing to have him frown upon us?

I stand the longer in this point, because I have experience by many, how hardly they dare or can be persuaded to crave pardon with confidence, after that they have been carried by their rebellious hearts to offend in somewhat, which they knew to displease him. Of whose weakness regard must be had: and for such especially have I taken this labor in hand, though I know that for such as have experience, less might have served.

And yet whose case soever it shall be of us all in trial, we shall find it no easy matter, after careless or willful offending of God, to have immediately upon the sight thereof, relenting and tender-heartedness: and when we durst a little while before provoke him, so soon after to be bold to believe in him, that even that so great a treachery, shall be pardoned: for canst thou believe forgiveness of thy sin, who believest not that thou must forsake sin? No, no, relenting cometh not by and by in the best who have thus offended God; but hardness of heart, till after awhile when there hath been a considering of the matter, and of the state in which they are: that so they may wax ashamed of their so great unkindness. (But otherwise, where there is boldness in sinning, there is no strength in believing.) Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable mercy, that many of these times fall not out to his dear servants, who are resolutely prepared to stand upon their watch; for it is a heavy work when that betideth us:

and they who see not this, see little in the mystery of godliness. And as I would have my good brethren far from lying still, and abiding in unbelief at such a time when they have cast themselves into it by their own default; so yet to let all bold presumers upon God, and abusers of his mercy understand, that God's bountifulness is not set forth in the Scriptures, to add drunkenness to thirst in men, and to give them liberty to sin who are already too forward that way; this I say: That as the people of Israel perceiving God to be justly displeased with them for their trespass of the calf, and therefore removing the tabernacle where his presence was, a far off from them and their tents, they durst not presume to go to the tabernacle to seek the Lord, who in displeasure was departing from them; but they sought him a far off, that is, standing in their tent door and worshipping: so let those who see their shame and nakedness by sinning against God, blush and be ashamed; yet, because he never taketh away his loving kindness from those whom he loveth, let them show themselves as guilty persons, though at the first afar off, and with much difficulty to seek unto him, that they may be received again.

And thus I have made mention of the first let which hindereth from godly life; even the want of daily direction to serve God by: and have showed how Satan holdeth Christians in dangerous unprofitableness, by keeping them unsettled in a godly course; and withal have set down some help against the same.

## **CHAP. 6.**

Of another let: The leaving our first love.

Now followeth the second let in this first sort, that is: that many such as do hold on in some Christian course, do yet lose and fall from their

first love, not for a short time, as they before mentioned, but even for years and days as they say: when yet, they having once received it of the Lord at their first effectual calling and conversion, it ought to grow up with them and accompany them throughout their life, to make every part of it more sweet and comfortable. And great reason there is, why it should be so: for if we be truly converted unto God, the longer that we have been trained up in his house (which is the militant Church) and tasted of the diet of his servants how good it is in comparison of any other; the more we had need to take liking of his service, and with all cheerfulness to live in it afterwards, which at our first entrance we saw so great cause to like and approve of. In so much, that although we shall have strong persuasions to wax weary and slothful therein; yet there are many more and greater considerations to move us to constancy and good liking in the same.

But that it may the better be seen what our first love is, I will in few words lay forth the same. We are to know therefore, that when God first called us from darkness to light, and from under Satan's tyranny and fear of hell to see ourselves delivered from them, which we saw were by our sin due unto us; and that yet for all that, he would pardon our sins, receive us graciously and love us freely, whereas before we were his enemies: this astonished us, and after due consideration, inflamed our hearts and caused us to admire this kindness of his, and to esteem and prefer it before all pleasures, and to have our hearts knit to him for it: for this love of his constrained us to love him most fervently and dearly again. Which our Savior Christ knowing well, asked of Peter in that case, if he loved him not more than the rest; even as David also calling the same to mind, brake out into these words, saying: I love the Lord, because in the sorrows of death he heard and delivered me.

Thus when we first saw the exceeding love of God and Christ to us, we could not (I say) but love him sensibly and heartily; and therefore our brethren; and so his word and Ministers that brought us tidings of it: for we no sooner believed, but faith that worketh by love, wrought this in us. And seeing we loved him, we therefore began to keep his commandments. And this is the cause why God's people are affected thus, and delight in his service, and one in another, as they have persuasion of their true conversion; and do therefore other duties readily, which others will not set upon, nor go about: and this is that which the Scripture calleth Our first love. Thus fervent are God's children in the beginning, to the admiration of many; and no duty is thought too great for them to perform to him, as he thinks nothing too good to bestow upon them. Yea, it may truly be said, If ever we loved, we loved God and Christ more than anything; as Paul showeth to the Philippians: and our brethren; as it is in the Psalm, All my delight is in the Saints upon earth: and the Ministers; as Paul speaketh, I bear you witness, that to do me good, you would have plucked out your eyes.

Now then, to come to our purpose, when this love shall wax cold (as here our Savior chargeth many with it, and many now a days are justly to be charged for it) is it not an intolerable treachery? When we shall let slake in us the consideration of such love of God to us in Christ, which never faileth, nor changeth towards us; and we thought sometime, that it could never be forgotten of us: is not this slaking of our love towards him, a just cause of complaint against us? And do we not declare thereby, that either we be grown dull, slothful: forgetful, or that we think, that the Lord hath ceased to be merciful? Is it not a plain testifying, that we think we are not regarded and provided for by him, so as we may continue all wonted duties and services towards him? Yea rather, are we not justly to be charged that



we are covenant-breakers, or have (as adulteresses) broken our faith to our first husband?

Whereas we having so long enjoyed the privileges of his people and citizens, should now much more do so, and look confidently for the promised reward, our salvation being now nearer then when we first believed. For why should pleasure or profit, wealth or favor, things present or to come, put out of place that love of God in us, or cause us for then to be rebuked? Why should not our works be more at the last, then at the first; as our knowledge is more, and our experience greater? And therefore who seeth not cause sufficient, that our affections of first love should continue?

I may justly make a heavy complaint of the decay thereof in many Ministers, whose glory and crown it was sometime, to see the people's profiting in godliness, as Paul saith; whose meat and drink was, to do the will of their Father, and who did well prove that they loved Christ more than all other things, by their diligence in feeding his sheep and lambs: and what prey or bootie soever they have met with, and got since, sure I am, that some of them do sometime wish those seasons past, were now present still. And whatsoever causes of this decay they allege, yet when they weigh their case uprightly, they can say no less, but the fault is principally in themselves. How many of the people also may I speak of, who verify that saying of Christ: John was a burning light, and for a season ye delighted in him? Who neither can honor God, as then they did, nor give that light to other? All which I wish to consider that which was said to them that had offended in the like case: I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love: Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent, &c.

Thus I have in some sort laid forth this first love, which God by his spirit worketh in all his elect children when he first bringeth them home, and maketh them to know how greatly they are bound to him for their so admirable deliverance and happy conversion. And herewith I have showed, how easily both teacher and hearer leave and depart from the same, and fall from it, though otherwise they keep some course in serving God; as the Church of Ephesus did, whom yet the Lord reprov'd sharply for that they had lost this. For thus he saith: I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and that thou canst not bear with them that are evil, &c. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, that thou hast left thy first love.

Our Savior likewise in Saint Matthew foretelleth, that this should be one thing among many other worthily to be complained of, That in the latter days (in which these wherein we now live, are reckoned) the love even of many good Christians, (as also of such as seem'd by good likelihood to be so) shall decay and wax cold: whereby, what other thing did he mean then this; that men's affection in the worshipping and serving of God, the zeal of his glory, love to their brethren, and fervency towards the preaching of the Gospel, should be sore and much abated over it was in the beginning, when they first embraced it and were enlightened by it to believe in him. And as though he would teach, that it should be a very hard thing to recover this first love again, he giveth this watch-word in the same place: [But they that continue to the end shall be saved.] Whereby (me thinks) he doth lively admonish and warn all sound-hearted Christians, to look heedfully and carefully to nourish and preserve that holy, pure, and first sparkle of grace kindled in them, against all that might come in the way to quench and put out the fame.

As though he would say: Although all piety and Christian care of honoring God be not extinguished in men; yet if they decline thus

far, to suffer their earnest and fervent affection and love to God and goodness, to be cooled in them: even this is a blemish not to be borne or allowed; and a sin, which both God cannot nor will not bear and pass by in them, and which striketh at the very life and salvation of those that offend in that manner; and such a loss as will be hardly recovered again. And, though in other words, yet fully to the same purpose, Saint Paul speaketh to the Thessalonians, when he saith: Quench not the spirit: as if he would say, The work of grace wrought in you by the spirit of God, to fix your delight on heavenly things, and not on the earth; and whereby ye were carried to set up in your hearts, the Creator and the things which he commandeth, before the creature: this work of the spirit destroy ye not; neither let your fervent desires and holy affections which have been kindled in you thereby, be as fire which water quenched.

Now then, if the words of our Savior both to the church of Ephesus, and his prophesy of that which should come to pass in the last days, how the love even of the godly should wax cold (which he spake as a thing both admirable, and to be much lamented;) and withal, this exhortation of the Apostle, of not quenching the spirit, be of any weight with us: why is it at this day with many (which are of good hope, that they appertain to God) as it is, and as we see it to be? That is to say, that their good beginnings have been turned into unlike, even dangerous proceedings?

For in many it may be seen, of whom it may as truly be said, that they are nothing like the people which once they were, when they first embraced the Gospel. I might justly make the complaint of any which have been but abated in their zeal and fervent love of good things, (of which sort there are innumerable:) but I would I might not also charge numbers that they are disguised, being so far off from forward and zealous professors (which once they were) that (as Saint Paul

complaineth of the Corinthians) they are now full; yea, they think it mere foolishness to hunger after knowledge, and thirst after grace; and as new borne babes, to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby: who if they think much to be still called babes, and so to desire milk; yet I hope, though they be men grown, they must still hunger after strong meat. But howsoever it be, and howsoever some have degenerated from their first love more than others, it is too fearful to see, (I say not, how many have no affection, neither bear any hearty good will to the sincere preaching of the Gospel, neither at any time ever did: for who can number them?) but it is too fearful (I say) to see how many of them are changed who began well: and (as the Apostle saith) Ranne well; but they have been letted in such wise as they obey not the truth.

If weariness of, at least wise, little pleasure taking in the public ministry, neglect of private conference and of exhorting and edifying one another, untowardness to good works and shaking off love to the brethren, embracing the world and the entertaining of ill companionship, with heart-burning against the Preachers for telling them the truth, whom sometime they loved and revered highly; and if the making of no conscience of open sins, where secret and small ones could not sometimes have been abidden: if (I say) these and such like in men, where the contrary have been, be signs that the first love is cooled and sore decayed; there are enough, who give just cause of complaining.

Even these (I say) are sufficiently convicted, to have left their first love, who are thus eclipsed and darkened as I have said. For how can others be drawn by their examples, when they see them not to hold out the profession of their hope with joyfulness as they were wont? Nay, how can they choose but be more backward in religion and discouraged by the same? Indeed I confess, it requireth the whole

man to be taken up and employed in this work, that God may be served of us with such cheerfulness and readiness as he was at the beginning: but what then? Can we for all that deny, that we ought to be employed with all possible care therein? And what day cometh over our heads, wherein God giveth us not encouragement hereunto? For what day do we not, or may we not, make our hearts merry with the Lord's favor freely granted us, and his loving countenance shining upon us?

And can it be any less then our great sin, to have our hearts going after strange delights, which shall shoulder out this which is the greatest? I grant we are renewed but in part, and that much corruption remaineth to cloy and incumber us; and through Satan's malice and vigilancy, not only to hinder, but even to hold under goodness in us; especially through so many occasions and provocations as we walk subject to in the world. But yet for all that, may we not shake off our fervency and diligence in doing the Lord's work. And although we cannot avoid it, but we shall be nearly laid at, and narrowly beset with all manner of hindrances, both allurements and discouragements; so as we shall be broken off again and again: yet must we therefore know, that our life is called and so we must find it, even a continual battle with our lusts worldly and unruly, and our affections unmortified: and we must accustom ourselves hereto carefully, seeing the Lord hath promised, to teach our fingers to fight and our hands to war: that in time we may be expert, rather than cowardly to faint, or treacherously to run away.

Yea but ye will say: We are ignorant in many points how to behave ourselves; which procureth us no small disadvantage. And I say again, by the grace of God, that ignorance shall not greatly hurt us, which we cannot be without: but shall serve to humble us only. Yea, but we are forgetful also, (ye will say) and that much troubleth us. To

this I answer, as to the former: It is not this that can unsettle us, if we add not thereunto our own witting and willful negligence. And if ye object, that for all our care and watch to nourish and preserve grace and holy affections in us; yet who is so circumspect and vigilant, but he shall be unsettled and turned out of his course before he be aware? I answer again: Howsoever this be or come to pass, it is but to the end we should rise up and recover by making our money to our God, who cannot be without pity towards us: yea, if we have felt bitterness arise in our hearts against this Christian course which is the Lord's yoke, and under our afflictions; yet let not this dismay us from clinging and cleaving to him; we are his, and he will forgive and receive us again. I have objected the hardest that is wont to hinder and break off our first love: and were our hearts daily set to count it our greatest work to keep it, (as how great are our helps and encouragements hereto?) God witnessing to that I say: though many do, who will not be counseled; yet we should not be they who shall lose their first love.

And thus much of this second let arising from want of some necessary thing, namely, of our first love: where in the way of answering objections, I have set down the remedy against it.

## **CHAP. 7.**

Of a third let in this first kind, namely: The want of the ordinary preaching of the word of God.

And now to make an end of this first kind of lets, we are to know, that there is another want which Satan laboreth to hold us in, and the fittest of all other to bring on the two former: and that is, The want of an ordinary and sound ministry of the word of God, whereby the way to salvation and godliness is plainly and in good order, with

love and diligence taught so oft in the week, as the people can conveniently attend upon the same. Which being the light of the world, and (as it were) the Sun that warmeth all the creatures of the earth with his influence: so it can but warm and enlighten them who are within the sound of it, as the Sun doth that part of the earth to the which he can spread his beams. And although many upon whom this heavenly light shineth, are not made fruitful like a garden by the heat of the Sun; but rather as a dunghill, to savor worse: yet such as enjoy not this grace of the Gospel at all, can be but as the shadowed places where no Sun cometh, which bring forth nothing, or else that which is sour and unsavory.

God be blessed for those which are painful laborers, but yet for the infinite thousands who know nothing, neither can know, I would that all which will be called the Lord's Ministers, did diligently and faithfully prophecy, and that the Lord would pour his spirit upon them plentifully for that purpose. If Peter could say no less, but that it was meet, whiles he continued in this tabernacle, to put the people in remembrance of heaven and the way to it, yea though they were stablished in it already no more to be removed: who doubteth, but that it must needs be a sore want to be without that help? For ignorance is a great and usual impediment of sincerity and good conscience: for when the mind erreth or misconceiveth, it doth mislead the conscience and deceiveth the whole man. For where that is not, besides the thousands which perish for want of it, even the godly (if any be there) cannot see their wants in grace, their corruptions of heart, and the many occasions by which they offend in their life; neither the depth of God's love, how he hath taken order to draw them out of all these; nor be refreshed with the oft remembrance of these things, as their need requireth.

But this is a large field to walk in, and not of me in this place to be long tarried in: but yet I will not cease to pray and hope for that which is wanting, as to be highly thankful for that which we have, namely: that the Lord of the harvest would thrust forth laborers into the harvest, and establish the liberty of the Gospel preached by authority, and continue to us the glorious light and sweet and deep insight into the will of God thereby, which we have attained, and many more might also have done the same, under her Highness most prosperous reign and long peace: for whom many thanks be given to God amongst us.

Now seeing by the wanting of this sound ministry ordinarily enjoyed, even the most of God's beloved do want the greatest part of their best privileges, or full weakly enjoy them, let all well-willers to Zion procure this as much as in them lieth, both by their fervent prayers and other Christian endeavors; and let such as desire to be more free from Satan's snares, provide whiles they may, to be partakers of this benefit. As for such as enjoy it, and prize it not above all that they have, or ever can enjoy in this world, but esteem it as a thing which they set little by, yea and could want it well enough, I will say no more to them but this: Many shall come from other places to seek comfort there, both from East, West, North and South, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves shall be cast out into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth: and that of Amos: Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but for hearing of the word of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the North even unto the East shall they run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.



They who should weigh, how the Devil hath labored in all nations and throughout all generations to hinder the passage of the Gospel, (as, if that one book of the Acts of the Apostles only were perused, doth appear in that time) might easily be persuaded, that the preaching and establishing of it, is a singular and rare treasure (howsoever blind men can judge of no colors:) and therefore that the want of it is none of the small lets, whereby Christians are hindered, if possibly many might be persuaded of it.

For how should a poor Christian rise up when he is fallen by any occasion, or come into the way again when he is strayed out: or how shall he be strengthened being weak, or be comforted in his heaviness; if he have not this at hand ordinarily, to bring tidings of God's will to him, and every way to supply his many wants: even as if the trumpet sound not, who can prepare himself to the battle? Therefore it is, that there are such main blocks laid in the way of God's servants, that either they cannot enjoy this blessing any long time, or in any good sort and manner, to build them up and direct them every way as is meet; or if they have all this, yet they shall hinder themselves and one another.

For it is to be lamented, to see how few can rightly use such liberties and make their profit of them while they enjoy them: as to draw out of their teachers, understanding, and humbly pray and labor for spiritual wisdom whereby they may have the right use of their knowledge in every particular action: and in the spirit of meekness to help build up one another, and to be lights to the ignorant by giving good example; but worldly minded, or contentious, or passing their time vainly and profanely. And if this complaint may justly be made where the Gospel is purely and plainly preached (as who doth not see that it may?) then what need many words to prove what havoc there is of goodness, where the word of God is not in place to rebuke the

evil and uphold the contrary? No less, (doubtless) then as if hailstones in the harvest season, which battereth and beateth down the corn: no less (I say) doth the Devil with his bad instruments make a spoil of religious and Christian life. So that it is apparent how sore an impediment the want of sound, familiar and diligent preaching of God's word is; Solomon including many hurts and dangers in one word, saying: Where that is wanting, the people perish.

The same I say of other helps to the building up of a godly life, which I have spoken of in another place, that if we suffer ourselves to be hindered by the Devil from the daily and reverent use of them, he shall sufficiently prevail in holding us back, that we shall not flourish as plants in the Lord's orchard: I mean if we do not consecrate ourselves to God, pray and meditate daily as I have directed before to do, if we delight not in reading, or take not the benefit of Christian exhortation and conference, watching over one another, and provoking to love and good works, and to take good by examples of one another: and if we be not more humbled by our chastisements, and our hearts more enlarged to serve God by his daily benefits: but trifle out our precious time after the manner of men of the world, finding no such savor in any of these as we do in earthly delights, namely, eating, drinking, sleeping, playing and dealings about our profits; the Devil hath what he seeketh at our hands, and keepeth us far enough off from our best portion. Finally, the want of our whole armor, or any part of it, whereby we defend ourselves from evil on every side, this (though all the other were present) should sensibly appear to be wanting, for the dangers and falls which we should sustain for want of the same. The remedy against the want of the word preached, is to relieve ourselves with it, where we may with most conveniency enjoy it: but rather that we sue earnestly to live under it: which would be more generally granted of God, if it were (as a benefit which cannot be wanted) sought for and desired. But

whether of both so ever be, let us so partake it, that we may feel ourselves sensibly (as by good diet) refreshed, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of our savior Jesus Christ: for which end it is among us.

The remedy of all the other wants, seeing it is a faithful practicing of the daily direction, of the which I have spoken largely already, or any other such: therefore it is sufficient to show the Reader; that all these wants the Devil will hinder him by, to the end that he may hold him back from the practice of the godly life, and consequently from the sweet fruit which he might enjoy thereby. The which I speak to this end, that he may be on the other side more encouraged resolutely to give over himself thereunto daily: seeing thereby all these evils and perils of this life so unwelcome and so much feared, may be in great part avoided.

If any object, that these first kinds of lets (though not so particularly) are set down before, and the remedies, as here they are, and therefore that this is superfluous: let such know, that I therefore set these down particularly, to let them see that a well ordered course is a remedy for and against all diseases: and therefore I mention the manifold lets in this Treatise, which come in the way to hinder it, that they may see the better to set themselves against them, and not to think their labor lost, which they are moved to bestow in acquainting and exercising themselves thoroughly in the practice of Christian direction from day today, as it is drawn from God's word. And thus much of the first kind of lets, whereby the Devil hindereth us through wants in good things; he taking occasion from the corruption of our nature, whereby we are prone to evil and unapt to good, to strengthen sin in us.

Now I have showed how the Devil troubleth many weak Christians by the wants before mentioned, here I think not amiss, to show how some are troubled by fear of their own wants without cause. For experience teacheth, what deadly heaviness he raiseth up in the hearts of many of God's dear children by occasion of their wants in grace. And among the manifold hurts which he bringeth by means thereof to many weak Christians, this one is not to be omitted: what grievous and sore discouragements he oppresseth many tender consciences with, while they espy some gifts of God in other, which they think be not in themselves; though they seek above all things to please God, as having had some sweet feeling of his favor through faith. These (I say) when they consider and deeply weigh their own emptiness of grace and barrenness, their manifold infirmities also which they bear about them; the Devil abuseth their weakness to a heavy and uncomfortable sorrow, which is also as unprofitable to them.

In which state he driveth them to find out in themselves many disorders and falls, sundry out-straying's from their Christian course, and how they cannot prevail over their corruptions; and so maketh the innocent souls, not only to think that they be far worse than they are, but also troubleth and disquieteth them beyond measure: insomuch that they have bitter sobs, and make sore complaints against themselves; in the mean while forgetting (through unthankfulness) God's manifold kindnesses towards them, and what cause of rejoicing rather, and thanksgiving they have offered unto them. And in this case he keepeth some of them many years together, persuading themselves that none are so bad as they, nor such hypocrites, &c. when yet the things whereof they do most accuse themselves, are mere infirmities, and not any gross or palpable trespasses. This description of them (that I say no more of them) who seeth not how apparently it bewrayeth the Devils malice and

subtlety in hindering, yea snaring them (as I may say) in such sort, as they cannot wind out any way? When yet (as hath been said) there are no sincerer-hearted Christians then they, nor who seek the Lord more heartily, for that measure of knowledge and experience which they have.

Now if they are blessed who fear and who are troubled for some wants in grace, who is so blind that he seeth not, that even by this which is their sorrow, and in their own account even their misery: yet by this (I say) they prove themselves to be blessed and happy? The special remedy for these is godly boldness, to consider what God hath done for them in giving them such hungering hearts after good things: which could not be, except they had tasted of those sweet graces already, and had some part or portion of the same. They must be persuaded to more hearty thankfulness to God, and see this their humility, meekness, love of God and desire of heavenly things, to be just causes hereof. Their unkindness to God they do well to acknowledge, and that is an especial grace of God in them; and that they find in their nature, rebellion against goodness: but yet, not so, that they show themselves more unkind by not confessing that they have much cause to rejoice, from him.

And therefore let them believe, that their estate is rather to be highly accounted of, (even as it is) seeing the thirsty (as dry sponges) drink up much grace, and the humble shall find rest to their souls; then that for some wants of grace they should cast down themselves half desperately, as though God regarded them not, when yet their estate is the estate of all God's children: among whom, even the best have many wants of grace, and know but in part, nor believe but in part, although they have through experience learned better than the other to sustain the same. For where faith is in God's promises (without which they cannot heartily love heavenly things) they must know

that they have a liberal portion, and therefore ought to lift up their hearts out of their deadly dumps: and as these and such like directions do counsel them, let them grow forward, but without discouragement; yea though their measure be small, and they in their own judgment be the backwardest of others.

Of small beginnings come great proceedings; of one little sparkle, a mighty flame; and the tall Oaks were sometime but small acorns: he hath well begun, who hath in truth begun; and he hath much, who feeleth that he wanteth much: and he who in an humble and a meek spirit hungereth after knowledge and grace, hath made good proceeding towards the attaining of both, and shall in time be satisfied therewith. This I speak to encourage those, whom Satan abuseth by occasion of some wants of good things in them: when in the mean while (if they knew so much) there is no cause; but contrariwise, of rejoicing. Thus much of the first kind of lets.

## **CHAP. 8.**

Of the second kind of general lets: namely, The unmortified affections wherewith he oppresseth the believer. And first, Of fear that they shall not persevere: and of pride in their gifts.

Now I having showed how the former kinds of lets should be removed: the second kind followeth, which containeth the sins and corruptions that are in us, whereby the Devil hath exceeding great advantage against us, to hinder us from this heavenly course which we should walk in. And they are, besides the ignorance and blindness that is in us, (of which I have spoken before) our unruly and unmortified affections, and the worldly lusts: which if they prevail and be suffered to rule in us, they thrust out with violence all grace and goodness. Of these I will mention some particulars, even the

most dangerous (if comparison may be made) of all the rest: and the Reader may the better judge of the other. I add [if comparison may be made] because they are all so raging, that when they are stirred up in us and set on fire, a man cannot tell which is most odious in itself, and worketh most furiously, and that most disguiseth us who make ourselves bondmen thereto. For proof of that which I say: when filthy lusts are kindled, and have gotten some strength in a good Christian (though that be never without his own great fault) how doth it trouble and disquiet him, yea wound and accuse him, he thinking it the loathsomest and most shameful of all others (as indeed there need no worse thing to annoy and disturb him;) and it causeth him oft to say: Oh, what can be more irksome, unsavory and shameful then this? Even as the people said in Samuel of their willfulness: We have sinned many other ways, but especially in asking a King: so I say, that sin seemeth to a penitent Christian (when he cometh to himself) most odious, wherewith he hath felt his heart most entangled. But to prove that true which I said; so doth he cry out of the rest, when he remembereth how he hath been deceived by them: a worldly and greedy mind seemeth most wearisome and unbeseeming of all other to him, and biteth most deeply, when that hath possessed him: and when he hath offended by anger, malice, fear, impatience, peevish conceitedness and the rest, he saith the same of them; everyone for the time wherein it hath been the chiefest provoker of him to offend, is most cried out of, even as if there were no other to be compared with it: thus he speaketh of them, I say, when he repenteth. And by this it may appear, (when there are many of these every while assaulting and, as it were, arresting a poor Christian; which suffer no other good thing to be in place where they be) that if he be not strengthened and armed against these and such other of that kind, he can never keep a settled course and daily continue the same in a godly life. Of these therefore, as I said, I will mention some, that the believing Christian may the more carefully

avoid them. And herein this advice is not unprofitable, that everyone mark, with which he is most incombered and most easily overcome of: as fear, anger, uncharitableness, &c. and by what occasions he is readiliest drawn to them: that he may the more prevail over them by such help as he shall have ministered to him. The remedies so far as I shall add here, shall either be set down severally with the several lets, or one remedy for sundry lets: or where neither is, know that the daily direction which we have been moved to practice, shall be the remedy in such a case. And among the unmortified affections I will begin with that which troubleth the most of them, till God give them release or deliverance: and that is, A fearful doubting of their perseverance. I mean, that poor Christians shall not so soon begin to be drawn out of the world, to any lively hope of salvation and care of pleasing God, and so have escaped one bondage, but he plungeth them into another; holding them under dreadful fear and distrustfulness, that they shall not persevere to the end of a godly life, especially in sore trials, and when persecution and strong temptations shall come.

And this fear he doth fasten upon them the more easily, seeing that affection of fear is most nearly glued to them: and besides, when they see examples of fainting's in many professors; and how cruel the ungodly, profane scorers, Atheists, Papists and persecutors are, among whom they live, this fear is soon strengthened and confirmed in them. For which cause our savior forewarned his Disciples of it, saying: Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell: and Saint Paul: In nothing fear your adversaries, &c. For this cannot be predominant but it feebleth utterly the powers of the mind, (as the raising of the mud in a spring, troubleth the pure water) and consequently holdeth back the instruments of the body from practicing well any kind of duty. In these fetters therefore of



fear, and most painful and irksome straits, he holdeth them: or if any escape, and so begin to rejoice in their hope again; yet shall they not attain thereto, nor grow therein, (distrusting themselves, and resting in the promise of God) nor be delivered out of their fear but with much difficulty and striving: and yet if they be, it shall not be at once, but by little and little; while the word of God soaketh into their hearts, as the soft reign into the hard ground. For I must confess, that as all passions are troublesome, and do much unsettle us for the time: so fear and sorrow do this most of all, especially when the things about which we fear and which cause sorrow, are most dear and precious to us. For how were the Apostles oppressed with both, not only at their scattering from their master at his apprehension before his death, though he had with many persuasions and strong reasons prepared them for it: but even while he was yet conversant with them? And namely that one time, when he went into Judea to raise Lazarus from death? Who answering said to him, when they heard him provoke them to go thither: Master, the Jews sought lately to stone thee, and doest thou go thither again? As if they should have said: Except they had been weary of their lives, there was cause enough to make them unwilling, yea fearful to come there. And so it is with us, that how great comforts soever we have enjoyed by the heavenly doctrine of the word of God which we have heard; yet as if we had never received any, when we hear any news of trouble coming towards us, we are on the sudden so taken and oppressed with it (yea though it be but a little) that it unsettleth us out of our present estate of peace and quietness wherein we were, and wholly possesseth all our senses, and scattereth our former comforts, as if they never had been any: whereas the Lord hath to that end under-propped us before with strong consolation, that when afflictions come we might the better bear them and retain our peace with him, such as his word had before warned us of; as it is said in John, besides many other places: These things I have said unto you, (speaking of his

comfortable doctrine, which he had before taught them) that in the midst of your tribulations ye may have peace in me.

This fear and faintness therefore under the cross, we must know the Devil will strongly assault us with, and thereby buffet us so reproachfully for that we rejoiced so, yea and boasted of God's favor before, and yet now in our afflictions we find not deliverance many times, but we are rather made ridiculous to the world thereby, and a gazing stock therein: besides the fainting of our own hope, which is more than all the rest. He will insult over us in such extremities, as he spared not to do to our Savior himself: Where is now your God? Let him deliver you now, if he love you so dearly; or else know, that ye have put your trust in a bruised reed: renounce him therefore, and shift for yourselves, except ye will miscarry; for there is no help for you in him: even as his cursed instrument Rabshakeh, Captain of the King of Assyria, did persuade Ezekiaes men, not to trust in or depend on the God of Israel in their trouble.

And therefore that we may find some ease in our troubles, let us gather strength from him, who will not fail, neither can be resisted: his word is the sword that must cut off this Goliath's head: and our faith is the hand in which we must hold it. And thus God saith in his word to all his: This short trouble of yours, is to bring you a long comfort afterwards, when ye have endured it a while: and they are sent you, that my power may appear in your weakness, and that you may have proof of my grace dwelling in you; as faith, hope, love, humbleness, obedience: and to make the world contemned, and all that is in it (as our fleshly lusts, which fight against ourselves) to be renounced, that they may not annoy us: and to cure many diseases, as carelessness, high mindedness and too much ease-taking in the world; for the rod bringeth wisdom; and Joseph's brethren said: We suffer these things worthily, for that we sinned against our brother.

They are not (I say) sent, but for our good; and they drive us more fervently to God; and cause us to call on him: yea, and they make us happy whiles we suffer them, (and like unto Christ himself, who was called the man of sorrows) and give us matter of rejoicing after: and therefore we should be thankful for them. But we do not a little bewray our unkind dealing with God, who are so unwilling to hear of them. For it is no less than a great gift; yea, a privilege unto us, as the Apostle saith: To you it is given for Christ, that not only ye should believe in him, but also suffer for his sake. And what unquietness doth it raise in us, when we refuse and impatiently cast off the Lord's yoke? The very fear of it is far greater than the suffering itself. Therefore we ought to resolve with our selves, when we see the will of God is we shall suffer it, that it is the best for us and very expedient; as Christ said to his Disciples when he was to depart from them: It is expedient for you that I go: and therefore endeavor to bow and submit our necks unto the yoke, praying for that power which our God seeth we have need of, assuring ourselves of help in due time, yea though he sometime defer it. For if he call us to suffer, he will most certainly succor and deliver us: that so we may find it verified in us which is written: We are afflicted on every side, yet not in distress, persecuted; but not forsaken; cast down, but we perish not. And the meditation of this shall (through God's goodness) be a preservative to us in our afflictions.

Saint Peter teacheth such as are distracted with these fears, so that they unsettle them and disquiet their minds, to cast their care upon God, for he careth for them. And the same in effect, saith Saint Paul: Be nothing careful and pensive, but in all things let your requests be showed unto God in prayer and supplication with giving of thanks: and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall preserve your hearts (from Satan who seeketh by unquietness to take your peace from you) and settle your minds in Christ Jesus. So that, if God

have either any credit with them, that they dare trust him in saying, That he will vanquish their unquietness that made them pensive: or, if they believe that he hath any help in him, so that he is able to help, they may with reverence be bold in their distress to look for it, and promise it to themselves; and yet so, that as they trust in him, so they tempt him not, but pray for it in token that they believe in him, and use the means to remove such pensiveness from them.

This remedy is found to be thoroughly proved and sufficient, as oft as it is applied to any such kind of disease. And herewith let them weigh the examples of other servants of God; Moses, Peter, &c. who after greater grace received, believed more strongly. But if they neglect and pass by such remedies, and so fall from fear and doubting to boldness and presuming, that is, to go from one extremity to another, they are grossly bewitched, and must be taught by experience to provide better for themselves. Which I say, seeing many are carried to use indirect means; as, by forgetting their fear, putting it away by merry company and pastime, or by hoping that no such thing shall befall them anymore; and so wax secure and careless: and thus not only they are deceived in looking for that which shall not come to pass, that is, to think that they shall be safe and without danger after; but also herein, that they think themselves the more religious and godly for that they have had such trouble, when yet they were without fruit of it. But when the Popish holy water scareth away Devils, then shall these remedies stay and comfort them in their troubles.

But besides these lets, the Devil hath another way, whereby he hideth the full beauty of the Christian life from many who have well begun, namely, by raising in them a proud conceit and opinion of their profiting in knowledge and godliness: like them of Laodicea, who said, they were rich and needed nothing. So that when they have but

newly begun, yet they shall think themselves to have no great need to go forward: and by that means they never attain to the sweet privileges which are to be enjoyed of them, even in this life. And after this manner he puffed up the Corinthians when they had received the Gospel, as by the Apostles writing to them here, chap. 4, and elsewhere, it appeareth: Now ye are full, now ye are rich, and reign as Kings: thereby showing them their slackness in proceeding to grow forward in the knowledge of Christ, and their loathing and wearisomeness of pains taking, and their pride and contempt: which was no small enemy to their profiting.

The Apostles were deceived by him after the same manner, who when our Savior told them that they should receive great light of knowledge and other increase of grace, when he should send down the holy Ghost upon them; they but dimly understanding him, imagined that they had them already, saying: Now speakest thou plainly, and thou speakest no parable: imagining that they had the full understanding of his speech, when they misconceived his meaning. Such as I speak of, being strongly possessed of this overweening of their gifts, is no small enemy to true knowledge and godliness. But this use the Devil teacheth men to make of God's gifts, even to be the worse for them, and to wax insolent by means thereof when they be glutted with them: imagining that they have more than others, when the more they have indeed, the more they shall desire; and seek to be brought nearer to God by the sweet taste that they have of his gifts already. Whatsoever [anger] against any person, or other corruption be joined with this action in men, (as it is too common) yet the chief sin in it is pride, which scornfully rejecteth to hear and learn those things which all do know they have need of. And what cometh of this, if it be not stayed and suppressed, but a waxing weary of learning anymore then they know, and a neglecting of diligence and care to grow better, a mean account making of those

which are good, and an acquainting themselves with loose and irreligious persons, or a falling into sects, schisms and heresy? Or if they do none of these, yet they bring upon themselves that curse in a melancholic solitary life, (having made themselves unfit even for good company:) Woe to him that is alone, as Judas: Mat. 27:5. So that they verify the saying of our Savior, that for not using it well, they lose even that grace which they had.

Such are taught to prevent this danger, by acknowledging that they are poor, and blind, and naked, and therefore to furnish themselves yet better: and seeing they attribute so much to their own wisdom, to learn of the Apostle: that they must become fools, that they may be wise: and that they know nothing as they ought to know: and whatsoever they have, yet to hunger and thirst after more, and to covet spiritual things still, and to pray with the Prophet: Lord, teach me thy statutes: and not to please themselves in that which they have practiced already, comparing themselves in a blind manner with those which are like, or rather far behind themselves; but be better acquainted daily with their own wants, weaknesses and corruptions, that more strength may be gathered against them: and to look upon them, which in the Scriptures, and now, are set before them, as the forwardest Christians and holiest examples. And as this is the remedy to avoid these snares of the devil for the time to come; so it is the help and remedy whereby they must redress their estate, who have thus been deceived by him already. If they have fallen to this point, and see it not, their danger is the greater: and a token it is, that they have unfaithfully, or not at all viewed and examined their purposes and doings so many long days as they lie in them; or very hoverly and to small purpose, which is far from the duty of such as have firmly covenanted the contrary.

In this case therefore we see what a benefit of God it is, that he hath appointed us daily an examination of our ways, that if at other times, any unbeseeming thing should have passed us; yet we might by this laying our actions with the rules which should guide us, see our wanderings or other transgressions. But if the devil enter so far as to fasten hollowness and falsheartedness upon us, which is, when we are not willing to see our treacheries; or in seeing them, yet counting them no great disgrace or matter of accusation against us, (neither are we willing to rise out of the sins which have passed us, bringing pleasure or commodity unto us:) here as the devil beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so he hath done us. What is to be gone about in this case, but that we duly and seriously consider that which the holy Ghost hath said in the Proverbs: He that hideth his sin shall not prosper; remembering this, that though it go sore against our nature to shame and confess against ourselves, yet the longer we forbear to do it, so much the more bitter it will be unto us after: and therefore it will behoove us to take again to us the sincerity and simplicity beseeeming the Gospel, and to gird ourselves with the girdle of truth, which we so shamefully cast off?

If otherwise, he seeing our disposition, shall carry us to luskishness, sloth, idleness, so that this saying in the Proverbs be verified in us: A lion is in the way; or any other of that cursed litter, that we begin to take sweetness therein which is no better than poison; and that the works of our lawful calling wax loathsome and unsavory to us; and the means to uphold godliness, become unwelcome; or other parts of the Christian course, irksome and tedious: do we not know, that as we sow, so we shall reap? And if to the flesh, that of it we shall reap corruption? What is to be done then of us, but this: namely, That we look to the root and fountain of this mischief? And if it be grown by little and little, trace it out by footsteps: know that thou art beguiled. For thou before didst delight and take pleasure in godliness, as

finding no safety elsewhere, and renouncedst all whatsoever might hinder and hold thee from the Christian course: and what shame is it that thou shouldest after be much backwarder? Remember also, that ease slayeth the foolish: and the way that seemeth pleasant to the flesh, is the way to death. And how hard soever it be to go back out of this course, yet God hath encouraged thee thereto infinite ways; especially by this one, that he (in anything that he setteth thee about) will be with thee, and not leave thee, nor forsake thee: but will give thee more than thou couldest ask or think, and therefore much more that which thou doest desire. The longer thou art led by any such slavery, the more hardly thou knowest thou shalt find recovery.

## CHAP. 9.

Of other unruly affections; angriness, peevishness, frowardness, &c.

Among the inward lets of godliness, (I mean the unstayed affections of the heart) though the particulars are infinite, this is not the least, when it waxeth angry, peevish and froward either against persons or things being crossed by them, that we cannot have our will, yea though it be but in trifles. For such is the nature of sin (to the end it may show itself to be out of measure sinful) that we may be taken in such a time with the deceitfulness of it, and found so naked and unarmed, that the smallest matter may be an occasion fit enough to make us treif and fretting, as if one should stumble at a straw, whereas at another time great provocations could not move us; and all for that the desire of the heart is not satisfied as it wisheth: (as David could not be angry with Saul for all the injuries with which he pursued him, and yet was carried headlong by his passions against Nabal for one discourtesy offered him.) Which is never done, but a sensible disquietness of mind and unsettledness of heart doth arise



therewith, which overthroweth the well-ordered course: seeing he that is led and carried of his lusts as the cart drawn by wild horse, is made utterly unfit for the time, to pray or walk before God in peace, or to do any other duty acceptable to him. And therefore who can deny but that such are caught with the deceitfulness of sin, as well as he who is overcome of anger, wrath, or any fleshly lust another way?

And if in this angriness, we have to do and deal with men, our perverseness, sullen and disguised stomach cannot be hidden: no, although we would hide and conceal it from the sight of men, yet such is the nature of it, that it overwhelmeth and covereth grace from showing itself or exercising any power in us, as the cloud covereth the sight of the Sun, and as though we had always been impotent, and had never enjoyed any other estate: and it blindeth the judgment from seeing the foulness of such disguising: and hardeneth the heart, that for a time it cannot relent for it, nor be humbled under it, until the burden grow so great to the soul, that it can no longer bear it; and the party come to himself, and can no longer suffer or abide it. It may be perceived how this cankered corruption taking hold of a man, (not otherwise destitute of grace) so carrieth him to be incensed against some person or thing, that it can no way be stayed or contained. A shadow of this appeared too evidently in two rare servants of God, Paul and Barnabas: when they dissenting betwixt themselves about taking Mark into their company, were so snared, that they departed one from the other; and with no less offense to others then check to themselves, brake off their fellowship for a time.

In such a case therefore, this is to be done for the redress of it: that seeing it is an high offense to God, a needless and fond troubling of ourselves, and a bereaving us of godly wisdom, yea and of common reason, (that I say no more) this (I say) is to be done: that we make diligent search and inquiry, whither we be prone and disposed to

such servile and base masters, and so shake off that yoke of bondage: and if we have fallen into it, and have been deceived and disguised with it, that as soon as we can, we do in trembling and detestation of our sin, separate ourselves from all other affairs and dealings, and fall into the consideration of the unseemliness and absurdity of it with all speed possible, till we feel and perceive our stomach to fall and relent; which will be by little and little, if we harden not our hearts, but go aside of purpose, that we may faithfully debate the case betwixt God and ourselves. The Lord hath promised, that such going apart one from another, yea (if need so require) even the husband apart, and the wife apart: that such seeking of him shall find him, and such dislike of our corruption (and namely, of such impotency for want of grace) shall be the next way to recover it again: and when we have seen what we have gained thereby, or rather how much we have lost; that (as our Savior admonished in the like case) we go our way and sin no more in that manner, lest a worse thing befall us. And this for a taste of the corruption.

Now when we shall consider, how many of these sores there are to blemish, wound and feeble the soul, that it may be (as it were) in the several powers thereof made unfit to every good work by one or other of them; and how the devil waiteth as a fowler, having set his net to catch us with one or other of his schemes and snares: what constancy and care (think we) had there need to be kept in a Christian man's life, to the end he may be rid of them, or that he may not lie long in them, or not fall from one to another: which is the cause, why we call upon men, as the Apostle teacheth us, that they should work on, that is, hold fast and maintain the assurance of their salvation with fear and trembling, giving all diligence to join with their faith; virtue, knowledge, &c.

But if we escape this snare, are we out of danger? Nay, he hath many more to catch us in. For through our ignorance or unbelief, he maketh the Christian life seem so difficult and tedious to us, that we shall wax faint and be weary of proceeding therein, or at least in special duties thereof: who knoweth not how fickle and inconstant we are in all good things, and how soon unsettled? Insomuch that oftentimes, even when we have renewed our covenants after some fall, or dangerous coldness espied and repented of; yet shall we by little and little, fall to our old bias again. Now if herewith good means fail, we are set so much the more forward herein: as we read of the people of Israel, even in the short absence of Moses from them, being but forty days.

I do not speak of the unfitness and natural untowardness of the mind, or unaptness of the body to God's worship, or to the duties of our particular callings, which being sometime in the best of God's people, are by moderate and honest recreating of them (if they cannot otherwise) expelled and shaken off: but I speak of the unwillingness that the flesh feeleth to hold on constantly in duty, further then it liketh; and that is, not utterly to cast off the yoke of Christ, but to serve God and itself too. For there is nothing more desired of it, then when some duties have been performed to God, that it may have liberty, as it liketh, to occupy and set on work both heart and hand in some manner to the displeasing of God. For even as the hypocrites and unreformed persons do never serve God heartily, but from teeth outward; and seeing God's service is holy and pure, but they carnal and earthly minded, cannot at all delight therein: even so God's children being sanctified but in part, have many provoking's of them, by that wisdom of the flesh that remaineth in them, to be weary of living godly, and are troubled with strong reasons to induce and draw them thereunto.

And this is so true, that even the best after they have renewed their covenant with the Lord to be more fruitful and constant, and also do purpose the same with full resolution: yet by little and little, they shall feel that fervency of theirs weakened and cooled, and sensibly declining, even as the Sun toward his going down. For which cause, the Apostle doth oftentimes strongly fence the Christians against it: saying, Be not weary of well doing. And again: Stand fast in the faith: quite you like men, be strong. And thus if we curb not in the unruly affections and lusts, which would soon fasten upon us, and do not oft record our many sweet liberties which we find in serving God, (which shall also be greatest, when we have continued longest:) we shall find this too true by our own experience, namely, what weariness groweth upon us now and then especially, of holding on cheerfully and dutifully in our Christian course.

For as the diseases in the nether parts of the body do make the heart heavy and the head to be distempered, and they being healed do ease and quicken both: even so, these unmortified affections of ours being out of order, do trouble the soul and disquiet it; and therefore the well ordering of them, is a singular cheering and comforting of the soul and mind. Herein therefore we must know and be persuaded that God's grace shall be sufficient for us, who by the disgracing of them by his word, will weaken them in us, and will make the way easy unto us every day more and more unto the godly life, and take away the difficulties which stand up to hinder us: even as we see how he encourageth us thereto, saying: My yoke is easy and my burden is light. Moreover, though the devil cannot break us off utterly from a daily care of pleasing God, yet he will so labor to unsettle us with reproaches, ill opinions unjustly conceived of us, false reports and disgrace with our betters, which shall meet with us in every place; that we shall be much disquieted, if not unsettled for the time, or stirred up to bitterness, and take counsel how we may be revenged,

with sundry other discouragements: even until we enter into the sanctuary of the Lord, and come to due consideration of our estate again; namely, that the Lord is not changed toward us for all that, but willeth us to rejoyce, saying: If you be ill spoken of for my sake and the Gospels, rejoyce and be glad; for great is your reward in heaven. But whatsoever may stand up in our way to provoke fainting and weariness in our Christian course, we have strong and many persuasions against them: as, that we shall reap our reward without weariness, Gal. 6:9: even a crown of righteousness, 2. Tim. 4:8. But because the matter ariseth more large then I looked for, (although I study with all brevity to set down the diverse kinds of untamed affections, barely with their remedies) I will therefore shut up this second sort of lets with naming the particulars only, which are not already mentioned: that the reader may know, and so be able to discern them, and so beware of them as of the rest.

So he sometime provoketh us to unjust anger, (which is no better than a short madness) especially when we can say, we had cause offered us: so easily doth he turn our affections against us, which God teacheth us to use to good ends and purposes. At some other time, he poisoneth us with deadly conceits and heartburning's against such as we dislike; also with looseness and lightness of heart; also with rashness and hastiness, wherein we do nothing well; with lumpishness and melancholy, and with diverse such like: the beginnings and first risings of the which, although our own hearts do breed, yet the strength of them is of Satan. By all which, as he seeth his best opportunity, he so possesseth our hearts, that they are no more fit (in that sort, being unsettled) to be employed in any part of God's service; then the running water when it is stirred and troubled in the bottom, is for our necessary use. And thus it may appear, how many of God's dear servants are holden back by occasions of their own corruptions (the devil adding strength thereto) from shining as

lights in a Christian course: and when God hath mercifully begun in them the life of godliness, how they do afterwards (though it be little to their commendation or rejoicing) break off or hinder their growing forward in the same, through some great fault of their own; not subduing their rebellious hearts, as God teacheth them, neither stirring up and cherishing the good gifts of God which were given them before, as they might with ease have done, being taught and showed how: especially, their fault is this, that they have given themselves to many fond and vain liberties, both in speaking, thinking and living; which to be pulled from, it would seem to them (when they should but even hear of it) to be as the cutting off a piece of their flesh. I speak not now of the unreformed, for their usual course is ordinarily thus, neither are they in any order before men except they have their own mind satisfied.

For the remedying of these and such like, this is no small help, that they set themselves to mark their disposition and inclination better, to what sin they are most prone: and besides, except they have a wise care to keep themselves beseeming the Gospel, especially in those parts of their lives which lie open to greatest dangers, that therein they be best furnished: and if they take a foil and sustain a check to their conscience, yet to seek the curing and ease of it by due humiliation speedily. But this will not much prevail, except their own hearts have been brought to take sound delight in the Christian course, and wane themselves from that which they shall know to be against it, and to be glad to be advised and directed how to recover. But of this second kind of lets thus much.

## **CHAP. 10.**

Of worldly lusts: and namely, The love of carnal pleasure, and the inordinate desire of riches.

But further, as he findeth best opportunity, he deceiveth us many other ways; and namely, in taking up our hearts in endless, foolish and vain desires of things, which we neither can nor ought to enjoy; as the lust of the heart, of the eye, and the pride of life: and so feeding us with the air, even with most vain and deceitful dreams, besotteth us with too much pleasure-taking in transitory liberties and commodities of this life; which pull our minds as much from godly duties, as they carry them after such unsavory follies. About many dangerous fantasies he occupieth our heads, that we may neglect the seeking of better things, especially in the time when we should be best occupied.

I mean by these, all sorts of worldly lusts, which are more noisome and dangerous then the evil affections mentioned before: though (one would think) we had little need to be shaken and distempered with greater than they, but rather study how to make them weakened and subdued in us. These worldly lusts, are lusts of the flesh which belong to the present state of this life and world: as the exceeding love and desire of pleasures, riches and estimation, or honor, &c. For if he can fasten our delights on these, we are carried headlong, as the chariot by wild horses is overturned. I will show the danger we are in by means of these worldly lusts in two kinds: The lusts of the flesh, properly so called; and the inordinate desire of riches and cares of the world. How a true Christian may possibly be disguised by these, (I say) that he shall be thereby as another man, and sometime grossly overcome of them, I will first show, and then add some remedies against them. The first is, when he shall be drowned in sensuality, and the sottish pleasure of the body, so that he is blind and impotent; and hath no power to consider, what the Scripture

saith: Favor is deceitful, and beauty is a vain thing. And what is the cause of this? For it would not easily be believed, that a true Christian should fall so far. The cause is this; that he having given his heart liberty to desire stolen waters, and to count them sweet, when he should rather have loathed and cast them up as vomit, and have made a firm covenant against the nourishing of such delights; and he having given his eye leave also to feed itself with such sights: he was made utterly blind. And that being done, his prayers became feeble and weak (though sometime attempting it) to expel and drive out such sottishness; but it lodged in him, and made him a slave unto it. Which cannot be plainelier seen then in Samson; a man of great gifts (as may be gathered by the story) but made so impotent by the look of a woman, that he yielded himself to her lure most reproachfully: and being caught with that which was precious in her, became a fool in Israel, who had been wise enough before to rule the whole land. And to this bondage doth a man, endued with grace, bring himself, when he will not see the danger, which he cannot but know is ready to meet with him: For can a man take fire in his bosom, and not be burnt? No more may such a one, who will be carried of his raging lusts, look to be free from great evil and danger. But behold further, what goeth with it? Even this, that he is senseless at the sight of it, when he should rather tremble to behold in what estate he is. For besides, that he knoweth he doth evil (which makes his sin the greater) his prayers are lost which he bestoweth about it, his burden of conscience is importable, the loss of grace thereby is unspeakable, the grief of the godly that hear of it, unutterable; and the rejoicing of the wicked, insatiable. And yet this is not so to be taken, as though it could be no otherwise with any of God's people; for many are free from that slavery, who yet have the same allurements: but they give not place to their unruly desires, believing that which is taught them, How dear it will cost them. Oh subtleties of Satan, hardly to be discerned! And deceitfulness of the heart, not to be trusted! So soon



to let loose, not a filthy man or woman only, given over to evil desires, (who can do no other but fulfill the same to the uttermost) but a son and daughter of Abraham, who doth loath and abhor such wickedness: and yet to be taken in such a time, that they should be ready to venture upon that which must needs work their undoing; and to wish that, by the enjoying whereof they were better be dead! But I must say, such do purchase to themselves the just fruit of their labors: for though they may be sealed up by the spirit of God to salvation, (for of such only I speak) yet what then? Ought they not therefore to be more holy, and beware of the least occasions of emboldening them to sin? And of all other sins, to be most suspicious and fearful of those, to the which they know that they are most prone and inclined? And by the committing whereof, they are sure, that their shame and sorrow must needs be greatest? Which two, when they are by their just deserts, once brought upon them, they will confess with us then, that we cannot be too circumspect and wary: and that it is no preciseness, to beware of the deceitfulness of sin at any time, or in any place or company: the which grace (yet) and care was thought to be too much austerity, till they smarted so bitterly for the want of it. But everyone can tell that this is true: He that standeth furthest from a raging flame, is freest from burning; and he who goeth far off from the brim of a river, is safest from drowning: A word to the wise is more, then a hundred stripes to a fool. And I pray God, that numbers of them who mock some for their preciseness, have not oft times just cause to blush and be wounded for their bold sinning, I mean, as well the sin which I now here speak of, as other kinds: and all for this, that they were no more precise. For if they may be deceived and overcome who are thought to be strict; namely, when they will at sometimes be too secure: what may be thought of such, whose usual course is Carelessness and a trusting to their own wisdom, who count it their disgrace and shame to be afraid of sin?

But to return to the godly, how good is it to learn and be able to hold in these fleshly lusts, as it were, with bit and bridle; that no such woeful things befall them at any time, neither that they make themselves fools in Israel, nor spectacles to the profane world to become their pastime? All which they shall avoid, if they make their greatest reckoning to abide in the favor of God from day today, and hold fast the assurance of it, and not count it too base a thing for them to do: Secondly, if they continue under Christ's government, to be willingly subject to him, and to put on his yoke: Thirdly, if they give not liberty to their wicked lusts, to range after the cogitations and desires which may soonest poison them; but follow their particular callings diligently: And last of all, if they will shun and avoid the occasions and objects of such mischief; and namely, those which we read that holy Joseph did eschew in the like case, being tempted by his whorish mistress, that he would not hearken to her, nor come into her company.

Another way which the devil layeth open to obscure and weaken the godly life in us; and that, by another of these worldly lusts, is: to fill us with noisome cares about the things of this life. A common evil under the Sun; and not the sin of the poor man only, (which yet is not allowed of God, no not in him: for even he is taught to depend upon God, being commanded to pray in faith, Give me this day, &c.) but it is rather more common to the rich, as Solomon speaketh: I have seen a rich man, as if he had nothing: And again; There is one who hath neither son nor brother, yet there is no end of his travel, neither is his eye satisfied with riches, neither doth he once say: For whom do I labor, and deprive my soul of goodness? This thorn where it groweth, it suffereth no good thing to grow by it, but choketh it, and overshadoweth any other gifts of God whatsoever. For a worldly mind is a monster of many heads, and infecteth the unwise with her poison, that not only the common sort, who have small practice of

religion; but even the best sort of people are made drunken with the dregs of her golden cup: and this is reached out so secretly and subtly, that hardly shall one perceive the danger of it, until he have taken hurt by it. Which worldliness where it fasteneth upon a man, it devoureth godliness, as if there had been none before; and so changeth the best men who are not aware of it, and who fear not the danger of it, that they shall become most unlike themselves.

But in describing of this, I cannot use the like brevity as in the former. Nay, I must needs confess, that it troubleth me very much, how to lay open this pack, it is stuffed with such store of contagious and infected wares; and yet men are so greedy to catch them up having respect only unto the gain, and therefore unfit to be dissuaded from the traffic thereof: so that few may be noted for examples in using the world aright. Saint Paul setteth out this sin which is compact of so many, this root which hath so many branches, when writing to Timothy and charging him to make this his text in preaching to such as have riches, he saith: The love or desire of money is the root of all evil: which while some lusted after, they erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows; Again: They which will be rich, fall into temptations and snares, and into many foolish and noisome lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction.

By the help of this Scripture and some other, I will first lay out some of the branches of this root, and some of the heads of this monster which devoureth piety and religion so fast; and the deadly danger that cometh from thence, and the remedy against it: that all these considered, we may see what just cause there is that men should be circumspect in this behalf, in a more especial manner throughout their days, besides the general care which they have over their lives. And first a little, of the sins of this kind committed in and about the

affairs and dealings of Christians, (for my purpose is to awaken such as are willing to be directed, not to show all the sorts of evil which are practiced in the world:) then somewhat of the sins committed by the occasion of riches, without respect of men's dealings; and the dangers that accompany both. To these two, I will refer that which I mean to speak of this first point.

In dealings, some of the sins which good men are like to fall into, are: Greediness in seeking and getting their commodities, when they consider not who is hurt thereby, so they may get; nor what danger they purchase themselves in things which are more precious: with the which as a daily companion goeth Hastiness and rashness, when covenants and promises are unadvisedly made, and afterward seldom performed and kept; being as fast repented of as they were entered into, because rashness doth nothing well. This way, in and about the world, many abuse the peace which they enjoy. But if there be any show or hope of profit set before us (with what hard conditions so ever) we are commonly so moved and tickled therewith, that it may be seen apparently, we be much unsettled and almost made drunken thereby; as when we first enter upon our inheritance and commodities, when they come in more roundly by the rising of prices, or great gain in our bargains, or any such like.

Another evil of this sort, is the deceitful looseness and light-heartedness in our affairs, which shaketh off all reverence and fear in our actions; and admitteth no suspicion, much less question, whether we walk safely in the mean while; or, as though our commodity-seeking were our heaven and happiness; and as though, because we have some liberty given us of God herein, therefore we may cast off care of better things, and pass measure in them without check or controlment: so that we sensibly feel our desire abated to the Gospel and heavenly things. To this is annexed (as a familiar

companion) foolish, excessive and earthly rejoicing, when we have success to our liking, and gain coming in. And from this ariseth rejoicing in our wealth (which Job durst not do, but said; That had been a denying of God) and pride of life, as also a lifting up our hearts above others, living in pleasure and wantonness, excess in diet and apparel, and nourishing our hearts as in a day of slaughter, disdainning our inferiors, repining at our betters, with a greedy and hasty seeking to go beyond our equals; and infinite others like: for even in these may God's servants be drowned.

And so on the contrary: if we thrive not, nor attain to that which we look for, what cometh from us but fretting and vexation of heart, for that we obtain not our desire, that is, the good success which we hoped for? So that before the issue cometh, we do not with contentation rest upon God, and meekly commit the success to him: no, but rather unquietly and distrustfully carry ourselves until the trial come. Besides these, there are other kinds of offending, which a Christian man may fall into: as when he shall over-lay himself with such multitudes of worldly dealings, that there can be no place nor time given to holy exercises of prayer, or regard had of Christian walking in his civil or common actions; but all the wisdom which God hath given him to far more excellent purposes, is bestowed this way, even to be rich: then the which folly, what greater may fall into one who thinketh himself wise? For what hath he provided for himself, but care, toile and misery covered with jollity while he liveth, and the fruit of his folly at his death; that he being turned out of all here, he is much vexed and disquieted, hardly brought to cast off this burden, and heartily to repent this his disguised estate; is hardly received into everlasting habitation after, but hath worse provided for himself, then the meanest godly person which lived under him?

I grant it is to be allowed that Solomon saith: A diligent hand maketh rich: and, The slothful cometh to poverty. But that none may be deceived with mis-understanding his words, let him be the interpreter himself what diligence it is which he alloweth to grow rich by; even such and no other, as will give him leave to seek wisdom as gold, and to lay it up as treasure, and to labor for understanding above all things: such also, as in the midst of his diligence to become rich, he be afraid to offend: and such, as it may not be his travel that he doth most look after. Such an evil is to be seen in the world (I mean, even amongst men otherwise well to be hoped of) that they do not mark, when the sweetness of gain coming in is felt, how godly duties grow as bitter and unsavory to them, which was wont to be otherwise with them. Last of all, besides these before named, in Christian men's dealings, worse things for the getting of this worlds good, may come to pass: that is, that unlawful means may be practiced, as injuring one of another, whiles either by deceit in bargaining or otherwise it be offered; or whiles violence be showed, oppression and rigor, and there be none against them able to resist it: more particularly, whiles men, contrary to God's commandment, do put their money to usury.

If in this sort or the like, we should be provoked in our affairs and dealings to go to work, (as it is the manner of the most to do) we should so blemish, yea deface the Christian life, whatsoever graces of God should be in us, that we lying open to our adversary but in some of these for want of a particular regard had against them, we should need no other occasions to make our lives irksome, reproachful and uncomfortable. But I have hitherto laid forth only some of the diseases that grow out of a worldly mind in men's dealings: but there is no less evil incurred of an earthly minded man, though otherwise religious, (even whiles he is free from all affairs) whereby his profits and substance are increased. For he who doth not yet see the

deceitfulness of riches, how they blindfold the heart that it cannot see clearly the beauty of Christianity; alas, how is he led about of his fantasies (like a fool) to dream of the happiness of his outward estate? Oh, what pleasure is it to him to think of that which he hath? How is his heart made drunken with the fleshly rejoicing in his wealth and welfare? How doth it delight him to think what liberty he hath in the world by reason of his ability, to please himself in that which his heart carrieth him to, or his eye lusteth after? When yet he is so much the more miserable, because he hath nothing to restrain him from such liberty. How doth he cast in his head what he will do hereafter, and within some few years how conveniently he will have all things about him, (I speak still of a Christian: for even so may such an one be beguiled for a season;) and before the time be expired he is taken away from all, like the fool in the Gospel, and laid in the earth?

And thus his spiders web which with much care and long time was in working, is now suddenly swept away in one moment. It were infinite to say that which might here be uttered, and to very good purpose, how many ways and how far the poor soul may be led to deceive itself; and finally to be utterly undone being altogether bereft of all heavenly furniture, through the foolish and sottish dreams of earthly felicity, which do oftentimes fasten even upon good men sometime unawares, through the corruption of the heart and the commonness of this evil which they see in the world.

All which how clearly do they prove, that riches are commanders and masters, and men slaves and servants to whatsoever they will force them; and get such secret love and liking in their hearts, that it will be a matter of great difficulty to break their fellowship, and yet a greater vexation of the heart when it must be broken? There is such a near agreement and liking betwixt our nature and them, that we can

talk with them as with a friend; and are led by them to many evil purposes and ends. So that we may possibly be brought to abuse them to the satisfying of our lusts, both in excess, licentiousness, pride and the jointing of our adversaries; and what not (that I say not much of the deceitfulness which there is small hope to make men see: that is, to become very slaves and droiles for the advancing of their children, neglecting for that cause whatsoever opportunities God offereth them of doing much good)? For it may be seen, that many rich men have seemed to live to no other end, then to leave great wealth to them whom (yet) they labored not to make fit to use it aright, and therefore provided to the undoing of them. And yet to comfort the hearts of their poor brethren with them, or to apply them to any such ends, they are backward and slow, yea too pinching, sparry and miserly, as if all were too little for a few bellies. And as they hardly come from us to good uses, so are we as much pinched and vexed with fear of losing and forgoing them: that it is not in vain commanded, That we beware we be not surfeited with cares of this world, and that we make them not thorns and chokes to hurt and annoy us.

By these or any of them, or the like, as every Christian is most prone to offend: so if he shall not wisely and circumspectly prevent the same by this Christian watchfulness through the day, besides other helps before set down, avoiding all occasions and weaning his heart from all noisome love thereof, learning also contentation, and nourishing a merciful heart to the necessities of the poor, with such like remedies as shall be set down; he shall be constrained to complain of grievous distractions of his mind, disquietness, and unsettling himself hereby, besides the hurt which others shall take by him. And thus it may appear by this which hath been said of this matter, how needful it is, besides a general watchfulness in and throughout the day, to be more especially afraid of some special



weaknesses which we carry about us, and to be armed against some special discouragements and hindrances by worldly goods.

I have showed some of the abusing's of worldly goods, both in men's dealings and out of them: the dangers that accompany them, who knoweth not without large laying out of them, seeing they follow them, as the shadow doth the body? For though I speak not of them who are drowned in the world, whose God is their belly and their wealth: it is too apparent, how honest and good Christians have (for the most of them) no heart to hear how they should use their worldly wealth, how many dangers they are subject unto thereby, and how their love is glued to the same; but they think themselves able to guide themselves in using and disposing of their riches and commodities: therefore do they fall into no mean or common dangers. That whereas they might have liberty above others, to lead a sweet and godly life, and to draw many to the same: yet they get little knowledge, faith, experience, comfort and other grace, themselves; neither are many of them provokers of their neighbors to a religious course, to love and to good works, by word and example. And beside this, that if they sin as other men, they are sure to meet with the punishments of other men; in just reproaches and an ill name deservedly, in an evil conscience and many vexations, beside many bad dealings which they find at the hands of wicked persons, which they might have been void of: beside these, (I say) what a judgment is it, that they being borne to honor, have deprived themselves of it?

## **CHAP. 11.**

Of the remedies against this worldly lust: namely, Covetousness and excessive love of riches.

But to set down somewhat more clearly and distinctly for help and redress of this sin of covetousness and worldly lust, because I have somewhat largely spoken of the same: I could wish that the remedies and reasons to redress these many and dangerous sins, (and to prevent the same, where they have not as yet broke out in many of God's people) that the remedies (I say) and reasons against them were well marked, and also the direction how to use them both, (as followeth) duly regarded. And to begin with the remedies which I will here set down, they are four, even as the reasons also are. First, he that desireth to be free from great blame and offense by the use of worldly goods, and consequently to hold fast his peace with God thereby, (as I know not what moral action is more to be desired) let him look to this as he would to the avoiding of the colic or stone: That no man be hurt or sustain loss and danger by him; but let him thoroughly be persuaded of it indeed, that he ought to do thus: as we are straightly charged by the Apostle: See that no man oppress or defraud his brother in any matter. So that, as we will be sure that none shall wrong us, so far as we be able to resist it, (and therefore we need not be bidden to regard ourselves:) so because few of us will be careful to see others with whom we deal, to enjoy their right, but will be ready rather to pluck from them; therefore is this charge given us towards others (not a little foiling to this sin of worldliness, if it be regarded.)

For then we shall be free from all the sins against our neighbor, condemned in the eighth commandment (as far as we can discern them) both in bargaining, (which are not a few) and also in other dealings with men, (which are almost innumerable:) neither shall we desire it in our hearts, to injure them, seeing the law that bindeth us is spiritual. And what a treasure were it, so to mind this charge in all our dealings with men through the day, that we might have the blessed and sweet fruit of it at night, when we are to lie down? Oh,

what liberty may such have, as look faithfully to this? (In like manner, do not sorrows enough abide then who restrain not their hearts from such injuring of men with full resolution?) Again, he who will be subject to this charge of the Apostle, and covenant holily, to use this first remedy throughout his life, namely, that none shall sustain wrong or hurt by him; shall be free from many branches of covetousness: yea, he that is armed to do no evil this way, or if he have, doth correct and redress it, shall show himself to be a man that hath struggled commendably with the world and earthly goods, and also to have gotten great victory thereby. And therefore are there few such; because few do tie themselves to such covenants. Which kind of men, if they could be free from blame in many other things, yet should they sufficiently be branded for worldly and covetous, if they be found unarmed against this.

The second remedy is: not only that we hurt them not, but also that we do them good. Which is to be understood of all with whom we have to do. Even as that Scripture teacheth, confirming this rule: namely, That we should owe nothing to any, but this, That we love them. And this reacheth (and is of us to be performed) to four sorts of men: (1) to Princes: (2) to teachers: (3) our own families: and (4) to others, our poor neighbors and brethren: to all which, we owe a several duty not to be neglected. For brevity sake to our Christian Prince we owe tribute and other duty by our goods, as we see it to be required of us both in peace and war. About which I say no more but this, that as all drawing back and unwillingness to perform duties necessarily imposed, is evil: so this is not a small blemish, when such as go for good Christians, do commonly contend and raise strife about their payments, and do not rather proportionably discharge the same with willingness. The next is, to the upholding and maintaining of the Ministry and the Gospel preached: which due, they who being able, are not ready to discharge, but draw their necks

out of the collar: besides that, they show they are neither friends nor favorers of that holy ordinance of God; so they prove, and that too truly, that they reap small benefit by the preaching of the glad tidings of it. So that even the poor who are able to give nothing, are in no better case, if they be not in affection and good example with the best and forwardest, in token, that if they had ability, they would not be behind others in that duty.

The third sort to whom we owe this, To make then partakers of our goods, are our own family, as wife, servants and children: who must have this performed by us, to have all good necessities provided them at our hands, as food and raiment, with whatsoever else convenient for them; that they may be the better encouraged and more enabled to live Christianly, and to walk in their callings diligently and cheerfully. And if we be occasions to them of neglecting their duties, by pulling from them any of their necessary helps, yea if we have not a care to see that they enjoy them; we in so doing, show ourselves worse than infidels. And yet on the other side, will not the Lord allow us to fall into any other kind of ill dealing, as coveting that which is another's, or irreligious seeking to increase our own for the maintaining of our charge: but that care and travel of ours, in our particular calling, which avoideth both these; (that neither religious worshipping and serving of God be neglected of us, nor our neighbor wronged nor injured by us) that is the manner of providing for our families, which is beseeming and meet for us.

The fourth and last sort of them which ought to have a part in our goods, (so that the giving of that to them which we owe them, may help to hinder and abate covetousness in us:) this last sort, I say, are the poor, whom we shall always have among us (as our Savior saith) that we may do good to them. Therefore much more we must take it as granted, that we may in no wise hurt or wrong them, which we

may not offer to any other, (though with some, all is fish that cometh into the net (as they say;) and they care not who forgo it, so that they may have it.) We must know further, that to these we ow mercy and compassion: and that, in this manner, namely, to give them for their present need: to lend to them for their upholding in their trade: to bear with them when they have it not to pay at the due time: and to remit it to them altogether, when they cannot, and yet fain would discharge it: and to help them up again who are decayed: (Always looking to this, that the subtle and slothful be excepted. ) And for the performing of these duties, let somewhat be laid aside as God blesseth us, either quarterly as we receive it, or otherwise, as God bringeth it to our hands; not thinking the tithe of our gain and savings in the year to be too much for them. The Apostle willeth men to be rich in good works and not miserly; and God calls Giving a grace. And know we, that the Lord loveth this, that we do it with cheerfulness, and (where much is not) that the widows mite was highly accepted. And thus I have showed who are the persons, and in what manner our hearts should be enlarged towards them. And this briefly be said of the second remedy against a worldly and covetous heart: which being laid with the first, shall not be found a small mean to disfigure and maim such a sin: especially, when they shall both go with the other two which follow.

And these do concern ourselves, as the former teach us how to deal with others. The first of them is, that they hurt us not: that is, that they be not means to draw us to much sin, which will as poison in the body, work us much evil. And this they may do, as well in those that have them, as they may in them who seek, and cannot come by them. In those who have and enjoy them, the danger is to be feared, which Solomon speaketh of: that they be not to us as they be to the most, our strong holds. The riches of a man, saith he, are his strong holds: and make him, as the Apostle saith, to be high minded. For thus he

writeth to Timothy: Charge them who are rich in this world, that they be not high minded. For if they puff up our minds, and make us swell, they will draw us on to any sin: as licentiousness, idleness, vanity and boldness in evil, whiles we think we have that which will bear us out, and hold us up against any which might rise against us; until the fruits of them break forth in us more bitter than gall or wormwood. Again, they will make us worldly, profane, miserly, discontented: for he that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with it: and he that loveth riches, shall be without the fruit of them, Eccles. 5:9. Also they will fill us with slavish fear of losing and forgoing them: and what will ensue of this bondage, but a wearisome and tedious troublesomeness? that they will not suffer us to rest; but (as the flies of Egypt, which with no beating off, did cease to disquiet the people) with care and pensiveness will torment us waking, and with fearful dreams sting and wound us sleeping, yea break off our sleep altogether, when we should take and enjoy it: till, as a moth, which taketh away the beauty of a garment, they consume and eat up all the spiritual grace that was in us?

This is some part of the hurt that riches may do us, even as they do procure and bring all these with many other to the men of the world; as agreeable to Solomon's words: I have seen an evil sickness under the Sun: riches reserved to the owners thereof, to their evil. These sins therefore, with their like, and the woe that they bring, if we will wisely and carefully prevent and avoid, (as who doth not see, that great diligence must be used for the shunning of the same?) we shall help in good sort to break the neck of this covetousness: which otherwise will bear sway in us, howsoever the name of it be odious to us. Now such as have not riches in any plenty, but are poor, may have worldly minds as well as the other; and are more like to covet, to be discontented, fret, and to use unlawful shifts to come out of their wants: whereby no small hurt doth ensue unto them. All which, true

Christians must learn to resist and withstand, and to see what allowance God affordeth them, and not what their greedy appetite would desire. And besides other means by which they resist, let them labor in their calling diligently, both they which want, and they who have much: for that becometh us all well, so as with it we provide, that we be not hurt by the worldly goods, that is, by diverse sins which they cause, whereby we should utterly disgrace our profession. And thereby and by no better way, we shall prove that we are not covetous, while we arm ourselves against all such evils as riches do cause men to commit for the excessive love that they bear to them: a great number of the which I have set down. And this of the third remedy.

The fourth and last is this: that we not only provide that we be not hurt by them, but also that we look to it carefully, that we be much bettered by them towards God's service, more than if we wanted them. For although poor and rich are commanded to consecrate themselves to God, yet they may best do it, who have most helps thereto. And who can deny, that in the wealthy estate there are many more helps hereto, then are to be found in the needy and poor, (this being granted, that both sorts fear God, with whom only I have here to deal)? For first, they have more time and freedom then these, to all exercises of religion and the worship of God, both public and private: I mean, they may often enjoy the preaching of the word, have recourse to reading, Christian conference in good company, meditation also and prayer: (which, how great helps they be to the keeping of a settled course in godliness, hath been before set down:) whereas the poor, besides that they shall look to themselves commendably, if they be not discouraged and made impatient by their wants; so they cannot for the most part, take the benefit of the afore-mentioned helps in any such sort as the other may.

Now if any here will object and say, (as indeed he may, if he mark the course of the most wealthy at this day, yea even of those who will seem religious:) That these benefits of God do rather draw men away from fervency and forwardness in a godly life, then further and help them thereto: I answer, that if it be so, it is the sin of the persons who are so unthrifty users of God's blessings, and their gross unthankfulness to him, who do thereby provoke him to take away his bounty from them, or to give it them in his wrath and heavy displeasure. For I am sure the Lord teacheth them the contrary, namely: that where much is bestowed, there much shall be required: and that this is the end of the abundance of all good things which he giveth us, that we should serve him with joyfulness and with a good heart. Indeed, as men go to work in the world who have received great riches at God's hand, it is hard to prove, that they be most fruitful: but let such know that their account shall be the greater. Therefore, the objection being thus answered, it remaineth clear and without controversy, that men who have received greater outward benefits of God then others, may and ought to be the better for them to Godward (as from whom just cause of care and thought taking is removed) then the poorer sort, who lie open to them both.

This good therefore we must see that we do to ourselves, who have received of him the commodities which many of his dear servants do want, that we hold the profession of our hope with joy from day today, that we may say it truly, that our souls are much more well liking by the abundance or necessaries of this life which we have: or else, we shall never be able to free ourselves from the blemish of worldliness. But if this grace accompany the three former in us, we shall well declare that we nourish an heavenly mind, and labor against this great sin of coveting and worldliness.



But to go further: our riches should do us other good, beside that which I have spoke of. For we should make them our friends to help us into everlasting habitation: so our Savior counselleth us, saying: Make you friends of your riches: and that is, by laying them up in the Lord's hands while we be careful to bestow them on God's poor Saints. For thus, we giving them to the poor, do lend them unto the Lord, and do (as it were) put them in his hands: and so whatsoever we lay out, shall plentifully be paid us again, even a hundredth fold, in peace (which passeth understanding) in this life; (though not always in riches again) and in the world to come, eternal life. Yea verily, such acts shall not be forgotten, but shall be witnesses and testimonies of our faith: (for why do we give but because we believe in the living God, who is a plentiful rewarder of all that seek him, and the savior of all that believe in him?) and the works of such shall follow them. Even thus should we do ourselves good with them: and therefore we must not think all too little for ourselves and those which are ours. And it will one day be wished, that we had thus done good to ourselves by them, rather than to be servants, yea slaves to our children in providing greedily for them, (for it so falleth out with the most) while we dare scarcely take any part of our goods to honest and necessary uses, lest we should thereby pluck from them: therein verifying the saying of the wise: This is an evil sickness, that in all points as we came, so shall we go: and what profit have we, that we have traveled for the wind, that is, in vain and for nothing? Oh the good that many might do with their goods (I say not, to others, but even to themselves) if they were careful to bestow well but some part of that which they have!

But this is no place to bewail such cases: neither have men almost any ears to hear, or hearts to lament such neglects of duty. To conclude therefore this last remedy against covetousness and worldliness, the monster of many heads: even this good, which I

have said, we might do to ourselves with our riches (everyone in his several estate, who is able to give and hath no need to receive:) which if we did carefully look to, who seeth not, how it would chase away the grossness and danger of this foul sin? And therefore much more if all these remedies be used: (1) that we do no man hurt: (2) but good, as occasion shall be offered: (3) nor hurt ourselves by them, but benefit our souls; we may be bold to assure ourselves that we shall disgrace covetousness in us, one of the greatest mischiefs that the Devil can work us. For if we did take heed, that no man in any dealings might charge us justly with unmercifulness or injustice; nor our own consciences: if our hand and our heart did go where we are bound to relieve and discharge duty: and if we did wisely shun the sins which by riches we are provoked unto (as needless spending, and miserly sparing, and their affinities) and take benefit to our souls, and by more religiousness look after the life to come; we should bind this sin in bands and chains, which will otherwise break our hearts with grief, and drown both souls and bodies in utter destruction.

And the poor (whom in this argument I have little mentioned: who are not therefore free from covetousness, though they have no great store of riches) shall best testify, that they be not (as the most of their condition) tainted with this sin, if they hold fast innocence, contentation, yea thanksgiving: that is, if they hurt not others by ill seeking goods; but be content with their estate, though it be mean, and thankful to God for it, seeing they deserve not even the poorest estate. For of both, this may be said: If their conversation be in heaven, that is, governed by heavenly rules, then may they well go through their dealings on the earth. And seeing the snare is in vain set for that which hath wings: therefore, they flying and mounting with the wings of watching, meditation and prayer, over the snares which are laid for them, shall safely avoid the deceits of him who

seeketh to entrap them. And this be said of the remedies against worldliness and covetousness: the reasons follow briefly, which should dissuade us from the same.

The first is: seeing we cannot enjoy them long, but either they shall be taken from us, or we from them: and yet this short time is also uncertain, as in the parable of the steward is declared, to whom it was said (even as it were unlooked for:) Come, give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward. This is the slippery estate of all things here below: as by Scripture is proved, all to be vanity; and by experience which teacheth what alterations and changes there are everywhere, both by death and otherwise: which while it is laid to heart, and seriously thought on, doth much quail the pride of life in us: and therefore also will wean us from the love of the world, and to the contempt of it.

The second reason is: seeing the riches of this world are not our own, but borrowed, as our Savior Christ saith: If ye have not been faithful in another man's goods, who will give you that which is yours: where he likeneth them to things that a man borrows of his neighbor. Now we see, that no man maketh reckoning of that which is another bodies, as his goods and substance: if he value his estate, he counteth himself never the richer for that which he oweth, and is ever about to pay it back: and the honestest man will be the more careful to restore it: but to flourish and bear it out with another man's goods, and occupy with them when they are required and called for, it is neither the part of a wise man, nor of one which loveth quietness and peace. Now then, for us to busy ourselves endlessly and griply about wealth, as though it were our proper heritage, when the owner is every day calling for it, what madness is it to be counted? And yet if it were our own, it were the smaller riches; godliness is the great: and though we are occupied about many things, yet that one is necessary.

And if he that goeth to war, doth not entangle himself with the affairs of this life: ought not we much more to be free from snaring of ourselves with the goods of this world, when neither they are our own, and when we are called to another manner of battle, where they are sure to get no victory who are entangled in the world? But these words [mine and thine] are so commonly in our mouths, that we give manifest proof thereby, that although we know that our goods be borrowed, yet we do not greatly remember or think upon it; and that we are tied with such love and liking to them, that we price them far above those which are our own proper goods indeed, I mean, knowledge and grace. But let this be enough to the wise, that for this very cause they should love them little: because they be but borrowed.

The third reason, which ought to persuade us to use the world soberly, that so we may not be tainted with worldliness, is this: For that if we be not faithful in this, (which is but little in respect of the great and precious treasures of salvation and happiness) we will not, neither shall be faithful in them, but shall show ourselves not too mean as we bear the world in hand when we profess, that we seek eternal life by the Gospel preached: but shall prove that all our prayers, confessions of our sins, and hearings are in vain, and that we shall be never the better for them. And what a point of madness were that? And yet our Savior affirmeth it to be so, saying: He that is faithful in the least, he is also faithful in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. And who doth not see it to be so? For he that will wound and trouble his conscience for a little commodity, will he not much easilier do it for a greater? And he that will jeopard his salvation for a penny, will he not much more do it for a pound? And he that will hazard it for a pound, will he not do as much for an hundred?

Neither let any object this: That some will endanger themselves by a great robbery, who will not have their hand in small pilfering. For, as that is no proof of faithfulness in the persons: so it cannot overthrow Christ's words which cannot be resisted, that is to say; If a man will make shipwreck of conscience and credit for a small benefit, he will do it much more for a greater. A great and main reason doubtless, why a man should be true and trusty, plain and simple in and about worldly things, and commit no unrighteousness, neither offer any injury to enrich himself thereby; when that shall be an utter discharging him of the favor of God, and a frustrating of all his hope of heaven and happiness. Therefore if we look for any benefit by Christ, any comfort by the Gospel, and any communion with the Saints, and in a word, if we look to reap any fruit of our holy profession; look we to it, that we be reformed in this part of our conversation; and if we desire to use well and rightly things spiritual which are the chiefest, let us not be loose, or (which is worse) unconscionable in these earthly things which are the meanest.

The fourth and last reason to persuade hereto, is this: that we shall give an account, as of other things which we have done in our life, whether they be good or bad; so especially of our getting, using and forgoing of our goods and commodities: as appeareth by the parable of the talents, delivered to be occupied, till it should be demanded how they were employed: and by that of the steward, who was called to give an account of his stewardship. The account which shall then be demanded, shall be according to the doctrine which hath been set down in the four remedies: namely, whether we have not used them to the hurt and injuring of others: and how long, and wherein. And secondly, whether we have done good with them, as we in conscience have seen ourselves bound to do, and as occasion hath been offered. Thirdly, whether we have not ourselves yielded to commit some noisome and fearful sins, for and by occasion of them, which we

should not otherwise have been bold to do. And lastly, whether we have been furthered by them to everlasting life.

By this we see, we may not deal and behave ourselves about these earthly commodities, as we shall think good: for we are but stewards and disposers of them, as the owner our Lord and master hath appointed. Wherein as we have failed, we shall have little cause to rejoice, considering that whatsoever we have gotten and gained, yet the worst is behind: even our account giving, which we shall not be able to yield, no not one of a thousand. And though I deny not, but there is mercy with the Lord, and plentiful redemption: yet it is, that he may be feared of us for the time to come, in occupying our goods and talents as he hath commanded: and it is also for them that tremble, when in remembering and thinking how ill they have used them, they say penitently within themselves, What have we done? But to the rest shall be tribulation and anguish, when they not wisely casting their reckoning before, shall be urged to it by the Lord, they being utterly unready for it. In this regard therefore, as in all the former, we see good cause to withstand carefully this sin of worldliness.

These are the remedies, and reasons which persuade to give a foil to this covetousness: now hear the direction in few words, how to use them both. For although we know them, yet if they do but swim in our brain, and be talked of now and then, they shall be so far off from doing us the good they may do, that we shall the rather deceive ourselves with a false conceit of practicing them, when yet we remain drowned in some gross point of worldliness still. Therefore it is necessary, that we nourish and retain a mind willing to see and find out what is amiss in us this way: and then, as the sins of this kind are most dangerous and many; that therefore we force ourselves from day today to stoop and submit ourselves in an honest and good heart,

to use these remedies, and be persuaded by these reasons, till we find ease by them, through practice of them: that is, a ready mind to use the world soberly and aright, and desirous (lest we should deceive ourselves through self-love) both to learn by the public ministry, and by our private reading, as also by the help of any faithful brother, (which can show us) what blemish remaineth to annoy and hurt us. Thus using both remedies and reasons from time to time, (for this must be no work of a days or a years continuance) with fervent prayer to God both to see and cast out such excrements, we shall not need to doubt, but that we shall be blessed in our work.

And yet this I will add: (because I know that the matter which I have set down for the redress of covetousness, will savor but harshly in the taste of worldly minded Christians) that I do not in all that I have said, speak or except against any liberty that God alloweth his people, about the use of the world (for some will be ready so to gather.) For concerning skill and wisdom in men's trades, dealings and occupying's, I am so far from counting them points or properties of covetousness, that I hold them for comely ornaments, if they be not choked and over-grown with the weeds of their corruptions. Yea I say more, that ignorance and unskillfulness (if ye except the contrary extremities: subtlety and craftiness) is one of the greatest occasions of evil dealing among men. Also I deny not but that forecasting and thrifty providence in a family, is both lawful and meet, and that no more be spent, then for necessary and comfortable use; to make provision also of things needful in the fittest time, so as it be without fraudulent dealing in fore-hand bargains; also good husbandry, wariness in their doings, sure bindings of men in their contracts and covenants; and sufficient security (for mortality sake) even betwixt the best, by writings or witness; and a taking heed of suretyship (as Solomon willeth) that one be not undone by another; diligence also

in men's callings; with such other like: religion and God's word alloweth them all.

And all to this end, that the more outward dangers a man can avoid, the more free he may be to live godly. But seeing it falleth out commonly, that the wisest are the worldliest, and these fore-mentioned liberties are much abused of earthly minds, and such do too easily pass their bounds, and much miserly nipping go under the cloak of frugality and honest sparing; therefore these fore-mentioned liberties (which being well used, are also commendable virtues) grow into ill report among the ignorant and unstayed: which otherwise are not reproachful, neither deserve any blame. And this I have spoken to meet with an objection, which might rise in the minds of some by occasion of that which went before. And if this content them not, they show themselves justly to be suspected of worse meaning, then in their objection they pretend.

As for them who say: If they had riches they might joint their enemies, and stand against them, and do many other things which now they cannot for want of them; it is not worth the answering. For God doth not give these his blessings to men to bestow them on their lusts, but to profitable and necessary uses. And where men do not make that reckoning of them, and learn not to be masters over them rather than to be servants and slaves to them; what one among a thousand is the better, but the worse for them? And therefore to a reasonable man I would say: What if we could in diet and apparel, countenance and controlling of others, flourish and please ourselves, also in other jollity, liberty and exercise? What were we the better? All men see, that we may want these better than the pairing of our nails, and that we may please God better without them, and that we shall not have so many things to let and hinder us, if we be free from them. We have promise of sufficiency, if we desire to live under his



government: and without that, cursed is all plenty. But here an end of this matter.

## **CHAP. 12.**

Of the third kind of general lets: whereby the believer is hindered from going forward in a godly course.

Now followeth the third kind of general lets, which do much hinder a Christian from fruitful and cheerful walking through his pilgrimage, as becometh him. And to this I refer all the outward occasions, whereby Satan draweth us to evil, and by the which he stirreth up most poisoned thoughts and affections in our hearts, though the things themselves, whereby he unsettleth us, be not evil: as, by afflictions and chastisements; by prosperity and abundance, or variety of God's blessings; by family matters at home, by our worldly (yet lawful) dealings abroad; by that which we see and hear; by change of our estate, place, acquaintance, and other our affairs; by the deep security, and bold sinning of others, who fear no judgment day; by the hard handling of those which live godly, by such as are mighty and in authority, who (yet) ought not to be terrors to such as do well: and to be short, by other things innumerable; yea, to say the truth, we go about nothing in the world how lawful soever, no not our prayers themselves, and hearing of Sermons, which are the holiest actions of our lives, but from them all doth he take occasion to hurt and wound our souls: as I will for the better instruction of the Reader, in as few words as I can, set down and show; to rouse and stir up such as have care to do well, to become more vigilant against his sleights and snares when they shall better know them, and be more wary in all their ways; and that they may see, that there are

causes sufficient, why they should daily be settled in a godly course, when they have so many occasions on every side to hinder them.

And to touch these in order: First, how justly is this to be complained of almost universally, that for all the encouragements we have to the patient and well bearing of our afflictions; yet rare is the man, who is not made worse, and whose heart is not hardened against God by them, rather than the person more meek and humbly minded? For if they be heavy and grievous they do oft times raise bitterness and impatience: and if they continue long, they will commonly work a fear of God's wrath for some sins, although repented of, yet coming a fresh into his remembrance. The Lord hath taught us in many parts of his word, that his corrections are sent from him to all his beloved ones, as from a most loving father, and for their great good; that they may not perish with the rest of the world, but have trial of their faith and patience thereby, and so most sound joy: so far is it off, that he taketh pleasure in hard handling of us, but doth all for our good: yet how many are so wise, as to make these uses of their afflictions, as God would have them; but contrarily, are led by the devil to impatience, fretting, frowardness and most painful pensiveness: all which do vex them more by many degrees, then the troubles themselves. For this doth he often ring in their ears: How can it be, that he loveth you, and yet afflicteth you thus? Again, God hath taught them, that he hath many ways to deliver his; and promised, that their afflictions shall not be above their strength, and also that he will send a good end of them: which being weighed, were enough to uphold them: but Satan washeth away all such encouragements, and carrieth them headlong from resting upon God's word with peace; and yet for all this his prevailing against them, they see not themselves to be made his bondmen. And thus it may easily be seen, that the devil doth usually take occasion by the chastisements of God's children, to turn them aside from their steadfastness in a godly

life: neither can it be otherwise, if they will not prepare themselves for them before they come, that their unruly passions may not break out so impatiently against God, as there is little cause why they should when he telleth them, that of very love and faithfulness he afflicteth them. This the devil had experience of in the days of Job, when he said: Lay thy hand upon him, and thou shalt see that he will curse thee to thy face: and although he was deceived in Job, yet he having had long trial of the nature of man, spake the truth in the general, as having long proved, how readily it is carried to unquietness by occasion of the cross.

He therefore who hath learned in prosperity to want and be abased, and to look for a change before it cometh, that he may not in the same be changed from a godly mind; he it is that shall be delivered in the time of affliction from manifold disturbances, yea although they be sore and great. But if our troubles be many and grievous, (as no man can warrant himself to be free from either) it is to be known, that all the privileges of Christians, and their whole armor, will be little enough for the enabling of us to stand safe and upright in them, and to keep our hearts in the peaceable and faithful serving of God. And otherwise, our froward nature being suddenly provoked by losses, injuries, heavy tidings, disappointing's of our hope, or other such molestations when we looked for no such things before, will pass her bounds in a moment, and carry us into sundry unquietnesses. And when we are unsettled in such a manner, we do easily fall into further degrees of impatience and fretting, whatsoever we thought of our strength before. And therefore our Savior said: I have given you many comfortable instructions, that in me ye may have peace when tribulation cometh. And I have not marveled when I have often heard, that many vexations and bitter anguishes of mind have possessed the lives of some Christians by reason of their crosses: who having many commendable parts in them, have not for

all that, such wisdom to provide for themselves better shelter against the time of need (God yet ministering such variety of helps to them) to the end they might not be destitute. These therefore if we enjoy not the benefit of daily, to make the heavenly life sweet and pleasant unto us in the midst of so many crosses as we meet with, and namely, hope which experience bringeth; it can no otherwise be, but that there shall arise many unsettling's, discouragements and uncheerful times, even unto them which have received some good fruit by the Gospel: so far off shall it be from them, to learn experience of God's help in their need, whereby they might hope for the like afterwards.

But to say somewhat of other occasions by which the devil hindereth our proceeding in a godly life: if we live under abundance and outward blessings of God, enjoying health, peace, sufficiency of all things for this life, are we then free from danger on his behalf? Nay rather, then is our peril greater, when we have so many more strong allurements and deceivable provocations to set our delight upon the things of this world, then when we were holden under of afflictions: for he worketh upon our hearts by occasion of these commodities (which many other do want) to puff us up with pride, and high-mindedness, and so embolden us to say, (because we have much) Who is the Lord? And to forget ourselves to be mortal men, when we be not in poverty, wants and sorrows, like the common sort of others: and to make our riches, peace, health and such like, our strong hold. But these are not the one half of his sly practices, by the which he maketh prosperity (as much as in him lieth) to be our bane, even as it is to men of the world: for he subtly maketh drunken our hearts with the love of our goods, and so holdeth out the love of the Christian life and the true love of God from us: for the one of these cannot stand with the other. The particular infections which from these general diseases, the devil seeketh to bring upon our souls, and all by occasion of wealth and worldly pleasure, who so weigheth but

indifferently, shall easily be brought to confess, that happiness consisteth not in the things which a man possesseth: neither that the rich man is the happy man, but is most commonly the miserable, the woeful man, and he, whom the devil doth so much the more easily draw to grievous iniquities because of his prosperity; and when he hath rocked him asleep, then he secretly murdereth and woundeth to death his soul, no less palpably then Jael did the body of Sisera.

For who doubteth of this, that as prosperity itself is God's blessing, and cometh neither from the East, nor the West, much less from the devil: so yet, that all the mischief which cometh thereby, is his procuring and subtle and secret bewitching of them who have this wealth, and live in this prosperity? According to the saying of the Apostle: It is the prince of this world that blindeth men's eyes, who believe not the Gospel; that being in darkness (whether they be poor or rich) they may not be able to see how to use their estate aright. And our Savior saith: It is the devil, who stealeth the word out of men's hearts, when they have heard it (whether they be poor or rich:) so that although it teach them both how to walk; the one in contentation, the other in lowliness and doing of good works; yet neither of them is a whit the better: and therefore the rich man, (for of him I am to speak) if he be not poor and mean in his own eyes, and fruitful in doing many duties and in bringing forth much fruit, seeing the devil so watcheth and hindereth him, can no easilier enter into the kingdom of God, then the camel through the eye of a needle.

Neither let any man object, that the devil deceiveth not a godly man thus: for except he have learned to use his prosperity aright, as in God's word he is taught; as, not to be high minded, but to be more plentiful in good works thereby, (as I have said) then otherwise he could; to love it little, seeing it is not the great riches, which Saint Paul speaketh of, but the mean and small; and except he have

learned to want also, as God shall try him: if (I say) he be not thus armed, even he who is otherwise the child of God, may be hailed by the devil to dangerous evils, and to a grievous overthrow, and that by the occasion of his prosperity and welfare. And therefore it is an especial point of wisdom while God giveth us peace, health, and a safe enjoying of our outward commodities, to take heed that we rest not in them, neither make them or any other to be fleshly holds or props to lean upon: for full easily they will be cast down with very small blasts of adversity and trouble: and howsoever we went for zealous persons before, yet full faintly shall we perform our duties, being ready to be led about by the devil so many ways, by occasion of our prosperity, and yet (perhaps) most of all, when God shall send a change.

But let God's loving kindness showed to our souls, (because it is renewed upon us every day) provoke us in all estates, to be true and faithful to him: and let us not serve him for his outward benefits; although I deny not but that we may have more liberty thereby, both to do our duties to him and to our brethren, and that more plentifully than in wants and necessity. And as it behooveth us thus to use prosperity, as that we may not abuse it: so, if we have (by any occasion) been turned out of the way, let us suspect our false hearts the more afterward; to withdraw them further off from the love of the world, and in token of our repentance and pardon obtained, to revenge ourselves; yea, if there because, to make restitution as Zacchaeus did.

But to proceed: Another occasion the devil taketh of quenching grace in us, by family-matters: about the which he so busieth and occupieth our heads, that right good Christians do perceive themselves sooner to take hurt thereby, then they can espy it; and see themselves unsettled thereby, before they are aware. And that is, in

the variety and multitude of worldly affairs, when either they are more then with the practice of Christianity we can look to; or being not so, yet they being sundry and diverse, our hearts are wholly taken up with them, and so they become unsettled and unprofitable, especially because we are wont to deal rashly, loosely and unadvisedly in the most outward things we go about. For otherwise, we taking our lawful works in hand advisedly and watchfully, and walking circumspectly in our diverse affairs, the devil cannot so easily prevail against us, whiles we are carefully taking heed to our ways, and confidently persuaded, that God alloweth us and is pleased with us in the doing of them. But (to say the truth) the most part even of good Christians, attain not to this grace in household affairs and matters about their maintenance, thereby so moderately and warily to carry themselves, as that they avoid the common hurts which the most men do sustain, that is: an unquiet mind, distracted or unsettled with some other corruption by occasion of so many dealings. In which case they make themselves (as I have said before) utterly unfit to do any good for a time: yea and so abide for a long space, if they have not the more tender consciences to call them back the sooner. For both they themselves have been wont through custom, to be hasty, forgetful and unwatchful in these matters; and have seen it so common a thing with others to do the same, that although they come even from prayer, or from a Sermon, yet can they hardly speak or do anything about their business and dealings, but they shall too easily show and bewray, how far they be from having their conversation in heaven, while they are occupied here on the earth; and that, it being a thing so common to be unsettled, wounded and sore shaken by earthly dealings and commodities.

And another great cause there is of this sin, and that is: a persuasion rooted in them, that no man how godly soever he be, can go about them with an heavenly mind; and that a Christian is not tied to

measure and square out his earthly and domestical affairs after the rules of Scripture, but that every man is to do herein as he seeth good; and that he can do such things of his own head, without help of the word of God. Which opinion is so deeply settled in men's minds through Satan's crafty beguiling of them, that the most even of those who be of good hope, are both at home, and about their dealings in the world, with wife, servant, neighbor or stranger, oftentimes more like brute beasts or frantic persons, then sober and religious Christians. And it may be easily gathered, that they tie all religion for the most part, to the public place: that is to say, to go to the church once in a week, to do as others do there, and to order other matters after their own discretion. So little do such consider what the Apostle hath taught: Whether we eat or drink, &c. And again: Do these things, as though ye did them not.

Now when men give this liberty to themselves, not to be directed by God in their most common dealings, and when the devil hath brought them to this point: who seeth not, how everything which they are occupied about, is made a let and a snare to them, and becometh a block in their way, which they stumble at? A man shall not speak to his wife, but he breaketh into frowardness: one neighbor contendeth, falleth out with, and railleth at another for a matter of nothing: and one is unquiet with servants, vexed at children, yea cursing them that ever they were borne, impatient and wayward at everything which goeth against him: fretting, if any man save a penny by him, though it be by good and lawful dealing: rejoicing, if he can pull ought to himself from any: and infinite other such. And this is the life of many: yet, who is wise to see and mark this, but that the devil may lead the most (as it were) blindfolded, whither soever he will?

A wise man will therefore (I hope) better consider this, and learn to disburden himself of multitudes of worldly dealings and business,



seeing they suffer not the mind to be free: and to subdue his affections, so (as I have before taught him) that he may have them ruled and under government, in one part of his life as well as in another, and about family-matters as well as those which are most weighty. Other remedies cannot be set down: but seeing this evil riseth from the heart which is stuffed with sundry corruptions, (as distrust, too great delight-taking in the world, rashness, desire of getting, fear of losing, &c.) that therefore it be carefully kept, purged from these, and that he be well armed, (as I have counseled before) and particularly with that part of the armor which is requisite against this point of Satan's deceiving him (as, righteousness, patience, and such like:) seeing he who is thus bewitched by him (as hath now been set down) highly dishonoreth God, and reproacheth his profession: but faith must banish distrust, and hope must chase away doubtfulness and fear: and he must know, that whatsoever he wanteth of them and such like graces, to suppress the said noisomeness of the heart; so much the greater ought his travel be, till he attain unto them, and yet when he hath them, to stand fast in holding them: and if he know not his sins to be doubtfulness, distrust and fear, &c. let him take to him the sword of the spirit, even the word of God, which may clearly show them to him: more particular remedy must be sought according to any particular sin, by well observing these in general.

Furthermore, the devil taketh occasion by change of company, dwelling and acquaintance, to steal away men's hearts from goodness, as he did thus deceive Lot; and to neglect the use of good means publicly and privately, as the manner of many is; and to change religion (as they say) with the place. And no marvel, when neither the word of God meeteth with them where they become, to awaken, instruct and admonish them; neither good neighbors to observe and provoke them to love and good works, nor to admonish

them, when they have turned out of the way: but contrarily, evil talk and company is found instead of them: for such force we read to be in them, that they are able to corrupt even good manners. But although they meet not with these, yet the devil taketh occasion by the very change of place, to make them change their manners: which mightily over-weigheth with good men, that they sooner gather rust (as coldness, looseness, &c.) from other, then they shall season them with goodness: and when they live not with such as know them to have been forward Christians, it is a strong provocation to them, and a tempting of them to be like others, and to become more backward then they were before, as we may hear of many: for they shall be set upon by the wicked train, till they have found out what is in them, that if they cannot draw them to evil, they may lead them with despite and reproach.

Again, when we see how little account holiness and Christian practice of duty is in the world, either in high or low, for the most part; yea and that wise men are grown to count it mere foolishness and niceness, to make conscience to do those duties, whereunto our knowledge leadeth us; is it not (think we) a strong cord to draw us after the multitude, especially when they who boldly contemn goodness, shall yet be seen to be merry and lusty, and without fear as though they had done nothing but that which they can justify, and as if there were no fear of the judgment day at all? How mightily he prevaieth even against the godly by this occasion, the example of the Prophet doth plainly declare. For when I saw (saith he) the wicked, licentious, and to talk presumptuously, and set their mouth against heaven, &c. yea (and more than this) to utter it boldly: [How doth God know it?] and for all this, yet they prospered in the world and increased in riches: Certainly, I (said he) have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. So that the licentious course of bad men so commonly continued, and oft without plagues,

as to God's servants they seem to be: and contrarily, their own life to be (as it were) a continual mourning and a sowing in tears; it is (no doubt) through Satan's malicious subtlety, a sore weakening of the courage of God's people, that they do not grow forward daily from grace to grace.

But how much more (think we) shall we be embondaged and kept back from beautifying the Gospel daily in our conversation, if we shall be so unwise as to like of, and join ourselves to the company and familiarity of such? For then must we grow to be of one mind with them: for two cannot walk together (as the Prophet speaketh) but they must be of one mind: therefore Solomon adviseth us, that we should depart from the foolish man, when we perceive not in him the lips of knowledge. q.d. if he declare his folly (that is, his wicked state) by shameful sin, and by his speech bewray that he hath no savor in good communication; but despising and scorning knowledge and instruction, and hating to be reformed. And again: He that walketh with the wise shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be afflicted, that is, take part with them of their punishment. We read of Joseph, when he was importunately urged from day today by his whorish Mistress to adultery, that he not only consented not, nor hearkened to her to lie with her, but would not so much as be in her company. And that was a special cause, why David would not go home with Saul, when he reconciled himself kindly to him, and bad him come again, the second time: for he knew his Court was full of flatterers, liars, slanderers, and malice-bearers. But the allurements to ill company are so forceable, the persuasions so many, and Satan's sleights so subtle to deceive, even those who have some fear of God, that they prevail with too many to their cost, while the hope of pleasure, profit or preferment doth blind their eyes in such wise, as they do not only quench, yea and so grieve the spirit of God in them, that thereby they be left destitute of the power and effectual working

of it: but also are led captives by the devil into many sins, and are snared in them, as the bird in the net, that they cannot tell how to wind out.

For help against this let, let us be made as wise as we may, by the former counsel and example to shun it: but if we be once wondered into it, common persuasions or ordinary prayers will do us but little good, (though even they are far enough from us, when we be brought to like of such fellowship) nay, that kind of devil is not cast out easily, but by fasting and prayer, &c. And yet this is not so to be taken of us, as though the Scripture did not give greater strength, then that these or such like temptations should overcome us. For if we enter into the Lord's sanctuary, and weigh upon what slippery places the ungodly stand, and how soon they are cut down (when yet God's promise standeth fast for the safety of his:) even this one part of armor, well-handled for our own defense, and wisely used against the adversary, doth set them at great liberty, which were so deeply plunged into danger.

But it were endless to set down all occasions whereby the simple who would do well, are how the devil beguiled. Our outward senses he so poisoneth that we shall have no right and pure use of them if we be not well stayed, (and yet it shall belong before we can espy and see it;) that one shall not hear that which agreeth with his nature, though it be shameful and evil, but he shall be tickled and affected with it, often remembering it with liking thereof, and pleasing himself in thinking or uttering of it (be it a foolish jest, a secret nip, a filthy rime, a foolish tale, a gross lie, &c.) till it have taken such hold of him, that he cannot shake it off when he would. One shall not cast his eye aside, but it shall be as a glass-window to let sin into the heart, and cause it to be delighted with the beauty of a strange woman, and to be taken with her eye-lids: nor one shall not see any man earnestly

following the world, or too seriously occupied about his profits with success therein and sweet comings in, but we are drawn and (as it were) tickled with the like; and so our minds begin to be snared and entangled, and itching to be doing where we ought not. And so we are ready to be led by occasion in other things innumerable:

1. We cannot see our enemy, but we have our hearts rise against him.
2. Nor hurt our foot never so little, but we curse.
3. If a thing go not forward as we would, we fret and become impatient at it.
4. If we be provoked never so little, we storm.
5. If we be told of a fault, we swell and conceive ill, Prov. 9:7.
6. If we be absent awhile one from another, we wax strange.
7. If we be merry, we wax light, &c.

What go we about, wherein we may not sensibly and easily perceive, that the devil is at hand to hurt us? So truly is it said, that he rangeth about the whole earth to bewitch, not the ungodly alone (whom he hath sure enough already) but even God's people; as may clearly be seen and felt of us, if we give him never so small advantage. This I have said of some of the lets, to stir up the Reader to observe others by them; as, coldness, deadness of spirit (a near companion to slothfulness) which causeth men to say: A lion is in the way, when they have quenched the spirit of grace in themselves, which sometime made them willing and ready to their duties. Then, Delay and driving off good attempts, till the season and fit time be past, wherein they should either resist evil, or do good: a common evil even among the better sort of Christians, to let pass the opportunity;

and under this pretense, that they cannot do the good which they would, therefore to do none at all: whereas we are taught, that a word in season is like apples of gold and pictures of silver; so is a thing in season: and we have been taught, not to drive off from day today. To these may be added, a carelessness in observing and looking to our hearts and ways, which grow fast upon us: a yielding too readily to temptation; whereas we ought in such cases to put a knife to our throat, and wean our appetite, Pro. 23:2. A common custom and boldness in sinning: when yet we should fear all our ways, Job 9. Prophanesse: which yet ought not to be among God's servants, Heb. 12:16. Looseness of the eye, ear and tongue: though the holy Ghost hath commanded, that we should be slow to speak, James 1, and our Savior hath willed, to pluck out such an eye, Math. 5, and both teach, Prov. 15:32: That he who turneth his ear from instruction (much more if he should lend it to evil words) despiseth his own soul. Now therefore in so many assaults, by so many occasions taken against us, and that every day one or other, yea many of them by so malicious and subtle an enemy, to no less danger of ours then the losing of our souls; who escapeth, unless he be armed? What wise man will not provide carefully against these and such like annoyances? And if he know not how, yet he will count his labor best bestowed in learning: then shall he understand his way aright, and know that he walketh in safety. And thus doth Solomon describe a wise man, saying: It is the wisdom of the prudent, to understand and his way. This I have said, that the Reader may see what manifold lets there are, first in ourselves through the corruption that is within us: and then without us, by the Devil raised up against us, (which is not persuaded to many, as were meet it should:) that we may see just cause to be better acquainted with the armor of Christians and other helps before mentioned, by the which only God hath appointed safe deliverance from these forementioned lets and annoyances.

He who shall be found willing to live after a Christian direction daily, shall more easily be brought to fear, and so withstand these and like occasions, that they disguise him not, making him to seem as other men, who fear not God. Wherein more specially, we must look to ourselves, that we wisely avoid and prevent the occasion of these, seeing we know how we have smarted by them: and when we cannot altogether avoid them, yet to arm ourselves by resolute covenant and fervent prayer against them; and when we have been overcome by any of them, we must see it, and mark our weakness, and pray more earnestly, and give not over: and God's grace shall be sufficient for us, both to quiet our minds by hope of pardon, and to weaken our sins afterwards.

And by these impediments from the constant holding out in a godly life, it may be seen, that it is no idle occupation to be a true Christian, and to continue so: and that his work is not a ceremonious tasking of himself with reading some prayers or other things, when he thinks good or be enjoined it; which yet (as little labor as it costeth men) would be neglected oft, both of minister and people, if they were not tied to it. Also we may see what need the servants of God have, to guard themselves strongly, and so to abide, as hath been showed before: and to be acquainted with Satan's crafts and policies, and by what means they be repelled and resisted. And that their temptations are sometime so forcible, that they are not subdued and overcome, but give them a fall into some open sin, (for the which cause S. Paul admonisheth, that men quench not the spirit, 1. Thes. 5:19.) yea into the same sin after repentance; but to the end they may rise again by the remedies appointed for them by the Lord himself in that behalf. And here we may see therefore, how they be tossed as the ship by the waves of the sea: sometime aloft in vain hope and confidence, that they are safe and in good estate, and yet nothing so: and at other times, cast down and plunged into the depth and bottom of fears, yea

of very despairing: which was the estate of Peter, when neither he, nor any other (when he forswear his master) thought he could have been pardoned. And this is their misery, that they are ever for the most part carried (when they be not well stayed and fast settled in faith and hope) into extremities. And yet (a thing most admirable) they are never safer, then when they are thus exercised. For as the iron that is unoccupied, doth soon wax rusty, and the stone that lieth still, is covered with moss: so they, if they be not examining and observing themselves, considering their state, watching over their hearts, fore-seeing dangers coming, and learning experience by things past, and in such like manner occupied for the time present, they wax barren and unprofitable, even the best; and in time, do break out dangerously.

And as they are in no estate safer, then when they are thus exercised: so would not they themselves be put out of that course, neither are weary of it, though they deprive themselves of many liberties thereby; but desire to hold constantly in that well fenced and safe course, (this being added, That they may have the grace which is sufficient for them.) Furthermore, by these impediments with their like, so many and sore, the faithful may see what they are beholding to God, and how deeply they be indebted to him, that for all the rage and violence of their temptations; yea so sore, as sometime they may commit a sin of presumption, and be in some kind of despairing: yet God sendeth a calm again, and a deliverance out of their deepest sorrows and fears. For as Jacob wrestled with the Angel; and when he was hurt, would not depart till he had blessed him: even so, the servants of God have conflicts with the Lord himself: who keepeth them down with one hand and holdeth them up with the other, that so he may exercise their faith, that it may not be unoccupied. Last of all, by this doctrine of the lets of faith and godliness in the children of God that they shine not out so clearly in them, we may see, that they



behave not themselves in their striving against sin and in going under their afflictions, as the wicked do: (who the more load the Lord layeth on them, the more they murmur and rebel:) but they when they have the greatest sufferings, they strive to trust in him, and in some measure do so; and are strengthened with greater power of Christ, and joyfulness: Col. 1:11. Also they, though they feel the power and rebellion of sin, as well as the other, yet they hate it with a perfect hatred, and would not be drawn with the cords of it at all, and so look to God's mercy through Christ: But the other, would not let go their hold of sin, the taste thereof is so sweet to them: if they break off, it is against their will, and for fear of God's wrath, neither lay they hold indeed of pardon. These observations God's servants may make by this doctrine of the lets, and many other such, to their singular benefit. And what should I say more? For it were infinite almost, to say all that might be said to the like purpose.

Now it remaineth, that in few words they be put in mind, that they acquaint themselves better and better with the Christian life; and daily delight and solace themselves in it, I mean, in one part or other of it (for it hath great variety.) For howsoever there fall out many difficulties in their lives; yet know they, that they shall be fewer and weaker, as they themselves grow more in knowledge, and stronger in faith and other grace. And although before they be brought to yield themselves to them, many dark mists are cast before their eyes, to extenuate and make small the sins which they should commit, both by hiding the punishment, and covertly objecting the mercy of God: yet let them know, that if they have once committed them, they shall be aggravated as fast on the other side, as that there is no mercy for them with God. And let it be remembered, that occasions to provoke to sinning, shall never be wanting, nor in no place, but shall be ministered, rather than not at all, even by things not evil of their own nature (as hath been said) as shall be fit for the disposition of every

man, yea even in the assembly of God's people, that they may not be bold at any time to cast off fear of danger. But let them fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold of eternal life, and follow such good help as they have received and learned of God: and so doing, though they find not the comfort some time, which they desire, but fear, because of their present strivings and conflicts; yet I dare assure them (the Lord having spoken it) that they know not the happy fruit and end of that which seemeth their greatest misery: for they shall reap the fruit of righteousness in peace, when they have been exercised with their trials, and have waited a while with patience.

## CHAP. 13.

An example of a Covenant made by certain godly brethren, declaring what manifold lets the faithful have in this world; (fit to illustrate the former doctrine:) contained in the two next Chapters following. In this Chapter: Of the first part of it, namely, a Complaint.

And because I have showed what impediments our unstayed affections and worldly lusts are, from a constant course in a godly life, and what remedies are to be used against the same: I will add an example of the practice of diverse well minded Christians, wherein the weaker sort may see this more clearly: seeing examples help much to such as they are, to make better use of rules to direct them.

In the year 1588, there met in a Christian man's house certain well minded persons, which dwelt in one town together, with whom also the Preacher of the place did meet at the same time. Their meeting was for the continuance of love, and for the edifying one of another, after some bodily repast and refreshing. And yet know, that they were no Brownists: for they were diligent and ordinary frequenters of public assemblies with the people of God. Neither were their meetings Conventicles, for the disturbing of the state of the Church and peace thereof; as many imagine that there can be no private fellowship among Christians, but it is to such ends: the contrary may be seen by their conference. These with one consent, fell into communication how the case stood betwixt God and themselves.

Some accusing and complaining of themselves, that they had not used their long continued peace and liberty of the Gospel to the end for which God did send both: but that they had been dim lights. The rest consenting, and by occasion offered among them all (well-nigh

twenty persons) sundry reasons and proofs were set down, to make their complaints more weighty; and also what evil fruit they did see to proceed from such a dead and unprofitable course of living: and yet the persons spoken of, did as far exceed the common sort of them that profess the Gospel, as the common professors do exceed them in religion, which know not the Gospel.

When they had proceeded thus far, it was demanded, whether there were no way to come out of this wearisome and unprofitable life, not beseeming such as embraced the Gospel. If there were any: what might be the fittest and best remedies to come out of such bondage (for they counted it no better:) and betwixt them they agreed upon certain, with such good liking, after they heard and conceived them, that it might apparently be seen, that their heavy hearts were much eased, when they did but see a way to be delivered from that yoke of bondage; whiles their plentiful tears were turned into cheerful countenance. The conclusion was this, they did covenant faithfully and seriously, to set upon these remedies forthwith and speedily; thinking that such a weighty matter had need of no delay: and thereupon, desired the Preacher to set down the sum of their conference and communication together, for the better putting of them in remembrance of it to practice it; as also that they might see what the sum of their conference was: which, seeing they agreed unto, they called a Covenant.

Now it may be, ye look to hear what fruit there came of this: surely even this meeting was a great whetting them on to enjoy the public ministry more cheerfully and fruitfully afterwards: and this mean with others, both public and private, did knit them in that love, the bond whereof could not be broken, either on their part which now sleep in the Lord, whiles they here lived; nor in them which yet remain, by any adversary power unto this day. And this I set down to

this end, as well that godly conference may be had in more account among Christians; as principally, to show what hindrances there are from a faithful proceeding in a sound and godly course, and how necessary it is, that all good remedies should be used to continue the same: this was the chief end why I did mention it. And the sum of this covenant I have here set down in the words following:

The true report of a conference, had betwixt certain well minded Christians, (Anno 1588) who saw that they had not lived according to the knowledge which they had, nor to have answered to their profession, as they might and ought to have done: containing a complaint of their coldness and negligence, with remedies against the same; and a covenant to return to God by repentance: profitable for many in these days.

We weighing advisedly and by due consideration here of late, the glorious and goodly beauty of a Christian life, as it is commended and set forth in the word of God; how full of heavenly comfort it is said to be unto all such as make it their treasure; and how amiable, yea and fruitful also it is (in whomsoever it be) unto others which truly know the price and excellency of it; and we so dimly and darkly beholding the image of this in ourselves, who yet had hope, and that not small, that we had a part therein: we saw just cause why we should confess, that we had been much wanting herein, and that the pattern of our life was far unlike this rule, when we compared the one with the other: and therefore complained with bitterness, that we had fallen into a deep slumber, being rather ready to think ourselves in safety, then carefully looking to those testimonies in ourselves, which might indeed assure us of it. Whereupon we fell into a heavy and bitter complaint in this manner, with plenty of tears: Oh, we see now, that we have not walked with the Lord, as by diligent marking the examples of other dear servants of his, we have found

that they have done: nor honored our God in the course of our life, according to the merciful occasions and encouragements which he hath given us. The fervent care and earnest zeal which we see required in the people of God, hath been much wanting and cold, in respect of that which we might well have attained unto. And as we see now more clearly, that our blockish and unprofitable life was not glorious to God, nor beseeming us who should have stood forth among the rest of God's people to give light unto others: so we did many times fear it before, and think, that whatsoever unprofitableness and coldness is to be seen in many other weak Christians who behold and live with us, it might rightly be imputed to us, from whom and such other they commonly take direction. This and the like we complained of: and lest we should seem to make it a matter of course, and to show no manifest cause hereof, let us consider such proof of the same, as our woeful experience hath yielded and afforded.

That this complaint therefore may justly be made, it appeareth in all those duties pertaining either to God or man: ourselves or other. For in all we have failed manifoldly: whereas yet by mean or indifferent heed-taking, in great part we might have done better. Concerning God, we have not purchased such glory to his name, and showed forth his loving kindness to the sons of men, as we ought and might have done: neither glorified his Gospel, as, if it should have been taken from us, we would have promised to do. Further, it may appear hereby, that we see we have not profited in the knowledge of the will of God answerably to our time, and to the helps which we have enjoyed for that purpose. For many of us are as yet but weakly settled in the chief points of Christian religion: much less are we fit hearers, with ready minds to put in practice any doctrine which shall be necessarily, soundly and faithfully delivered unto us. Nay, we must needs confess to our shame, that the means to come by knowledge,

have been very negligently used of us: as, seldom reading; and in hearing, not usually preparing our hearts before we come, with casting off the sins which might hinder us, and coming with meekness: neither in hearing, have been diligently attending and hearkening to the voice of God; neither after our hearing, have usually meditated or communed with other of that which we have heard. So that this hath not been our delight, but with much unreverence (for so holy and heavenly a service) gone about. Moreover, we have not so tamed our corrupt nature, and so set ourselves against the same in many particulars, so as we have prevailed over it in our temptations: (for we have thought this too tedious and irksome for us;) but we have favored exceedingly and given too much liberty to ourselves in our sins; not ready to dislike and withstand the same, as either some of us sometime have done, or as we have seen other of God's servants to have done as Joseph (Gen. 39.) did in onetime; Moses (Hebr. 11:24.) in another. Yet the means which we use sometimes to obtain grace, if they were continued, would bring to pass some effects this way not to be complained of: therefore seeing we thus fail herein, we must needs complain bitterly. And what is like to be a greater hinderer of true godliness in us, then this tender bearing with ourselves in our sins, as being hardly brought to offer any violence unto them: when yet we know, that the smallest even of our evil lusts, do fight against our souls, are rank poison unto us, and have need to be driven out with most strong medicines?

And as concerning the danger of favoring ourselves in our sins, though secret and smaller than many sins seem, these fearful effects have followed: that having winked at the smaller, we have rushed and been plunged into greater: and not chasing away light and wandering desires, we have fallen into deeper and more dangerous delighting in then, which having once taken hold of us, could not

with ten times so much ado be removed: yea by this sleight striving against some, we have been overcome of many and sundry other. Some have taken great hurt by worldliness, decaying as fast in grace and goodness, as they have gone on with too much intemperance and excess in that deceivableness: some have grown into great coldness, and in apparent security have not espied their estate once to be changed; but have kept a kind of persuasion, that they have been in as good case for all this, as ever they were when greatest care was in them: some have been ready with conceitedness and forward judging to break off their course of Christian walking sometime, and their fellowship and communion with their brethren. Oftentimes such an acquaintance hath grown by this favoring of ourselves in someone, with falling into many, yea and those very perilous, (as strangeness betwixt neighbors, hollowness, untrustiness, jarring's, a growing after the common sort, slow growing on in that which yet was our profession, with many other such annoyances) that it may well be said, that fearful effects have followed this bearing of ourselves, even in us who have been thought to be of the forwarder sort. Now when these and such like unsavory fruits have come from us, and that we have in such like manner (as hath been said) walked in the world, what hath been our estate and condition, but that which might well enough beseem such as have in no careful sort been professors of religion?

Our comfort hath been flattery, and deceiving of our selves: our fervency and zeal, which ought still to have increased, hath been benumbed and turned into senseless blockishness: our company unprofitable, if not hurtful and dangerous: and when we have in any manner looked into our selves, wound of conscience and terror hath been found within us, shame and reproach hath been without; or (which is worse than both) hardness of heart hath overgrown us. As for the Lord, neither could we, neither durst we have our recourse



unto him: and from any besides him, we knew no sound comfort could be attained. To forget this our misery, was impossible; and to be thinking of it, intolerable: and so betwixt the one and the other we could not be (when we were at the best) but most uncomfortable. But yet we living through God's goodness, under the ministry of the word, could not be so forgetful of that which had been in us, nor so blockish in thinking and considering of that which was taught us, neither all religion so utterly extinguished in us, but that the sparkles of zeal which were in us, must needs be kindled one time or other: by means whereof, we were enforced to see a marvelous decay of godliness, and a change from that which had been in us; and thereby were driven into exceeding heaviness, to behold from what we had fallen, and yet utterly unable to recover ourselves again for the time. If sometime by more earnest stirring up of ourselves, we could obtain this of ourselves, to humble our hearts before God by prayer, confession of our sin, &c. (which yet in such a case we were brought to very hardly, when we had greatest need:) yet we may behold here what a bitter fruit we reaped (and that also long continuing with us) of our forenamed liberty seeking, and for giving the beginnings of sin such entertainment within us.

Another proof, that this our complaint is just, is: that we have not so grown in grace and in the fruits of godliness, that we have been hereby amiable in the eyes of God and of his good servants, neither have we taken up our delight in laboring after them: as for example, In our afflictions and trials we have not felt ourselves contented, that the Lord should exercise us as it hath been seen good to him: we have not overcome impatience in them, much less rejoiced in bearing them, Act. 5:41. We have not taken occasion by God's blessings, of liberty, peace, health, fellowship one with another, prosperity and such like, to be more fruitful and cheerful in doing all good duties, as occasion hath been offered: lowliness, meekness, kind-heartedness,

faithfulness to men, sincerity to God in the good things which we have done, have oft and much been wanting: very sparry and miserly we are in prayer, meditation, trial of ourselves, and laboring to know sin better, and confessing against ourselves that which we know: soon weary of well doing, yet not grieved at it; unwearied in things needless. We so hardly and slightly see the necessity of practice of many duties and precepts, which by doctrine are commended unto us, that we rest in that which hath been, and coldly arise up to any new or further proceeding. Our crucifying of ourselves to the world, that we might be content to be despised and of little account in it; or our crucifying of the world unto ourselves, that it might not blear our eyes with the vanity and deceivable enticements and baits of it, hath been very faintly gone about of us: our experience in marking the course of God's dealings towards us, in comforting us after well doing, in letting us feel that an hundred fold for the forsaking of any part of our will: also in this chastising of us for our security or other defaults, alas it is very small. So that neither may it be sufficient for us to encourage others to a godly life upon our own trial (it is so weak;) neither is it such, as ministereth any great wisdom or direction to ourselves to hold on in a good course: and yet how frozen and faint our persuading and encouraging of others is, when we are not well settled ourselves; it may be considered with grief enough to him that listeth to weigh it. Our little watching of our hearts against folly, or of our whole life, that in our solitariness we might commune with the Lord and our own hearts, in company be fit to do good or take good, that evil might be far from us; may justly shame and fear us to think of: our little laboring through love (as our callings will permit) to be fruitful and occupied in that which might increase our peace, and uphold our Christian estate, is lamentable. And thus by this, and such other like, it may easily appear, that seeing we may charge ourselves in this wise, we have good cause to complain, that it is not with us as it ought to be.

And from these accusations ariseth another: that we take too liberal an use of lawful things; never suspecting that any hurt or danger can thereby come unto us; as in diet, apparel, sleep, the use of marriage, dealings in the world, and talking thereof: forgetting that which the holy Ghost hath taught us; that is, that these lawful things, namely, pleasures and profits, are called snares, and therefore easily able to entangle men and hold them fast; so as it shall be hard for them to run the race of Christian duty required of them: and that they are said to press men down; that by means of them, they cannot with such cheerfulness and fruit live unto God. Wherein to be directed, this may serve us for a rule: that as everyone of us can see what is sufficient, so we bestow no more time about the world then we needs must, neither in talk nor other dealings: fearing withal, lest we should be carried to love it too much: wherein the more that every man laboreth to overcome himself, that his cheerfulness in good duties may not be hindered; so much the more he shall have to rejoyce, that he hath been content to abridge his own delight for better things.

Another proof of this our just complaint, is: that we have had little feeling of the wants and miseries of others. To see how many thousands walk ignorantly; other many, in security, hypocrisy, superstition, &c. many to have fallen away utterly, after they had received a taste of the Gospel: who should not be moved at the beholding of it? And pity them, as much as in him should lie? And not to be content, that we ourselves should do well, whiles we see so many in calamity. But it cannot be denied, but that their estate, either of the desolate beyond the seas, in many countries; or of the distressed ones amongst us, doth little touch or come near us: whereby as our prayers are weak which are made in their behalf, so are the other fruits of our compassion small and few. For as liberality is cold in respect of the ability which many have, so few of us are

grieved at their evils, or go about to call back and reclaim such as we may: we have not much set our minds on this, how we might best prevail with, and draw our kindred, acquaintance, familiars, families, &c. neither of purpose to order our ways so, as we might by our holy conversation win either these, or strangers to God: neither to strengthen the weak, and help forward such as have been at a staggering. And that which is more, if we have done any of these, yet we have done it more hoverly and coldly, whether with our families, or other with whom we have had to do that way: not in meekness, love, compassion, bearing as there hath been cause with them, or heartily seeking to win them unto God.

The cause hereof was no one; but yet chiefly our evil hearts: which for all the taste of holy doctrine, and light which we had of the life to come, yet being cleansed and renewed but in part, were evermore in respect of our corruption prone to evil, and unapt to goodness; so that, not only after good means using, they carried us to a forgetfulness of that good which was offered us, either in prayer, conference, or the ministry of the word, and to a sensible desire at least of some declining; but even in the time of our enjoying of them, our hearts deceived us, that we could not make (I speak of the most times) any great use or profit of them at all. But that the evil of the heart may the better appear, and so the cause of our unprofitableness the more clearly be seen, it shall be good to set down some of the particular corruptions of it, and how easily they break forth and show themselves by the smallest occasions. Now the heart is deceitful, whereby when we are towards or in the way to great danger, yet we are not willing, or not able to see and decline it. It is hardened in great part, so that it is not easily brought to relenting, nor to be touched, and to melt: and so good meditation and the fruitfulest doctrine doth hardly affect us. Frowardness, which disquieteth and distempereth the whole life; peevishness, when we cannot abide any

word uttered, but it is taken in ill part, and most rank poison gushing out against them that displease us; and impatience and unquietness under our afflictions and crosses, are in it: hypocrisy also. It is also idle and slothful in going about duty: yea and untoward in the same. It is fraught with self-love, which is, when we favor ourselves too much, and please ourselves in our sins, when yet the smallest provocations thereto, should displease us.

Earthly-mindedness is another stream running from this fountain, when we are drawn to the love of the commodities of this world, and are led with a desire of growing rich: which snareth us, and calleth back our minds from living holily, and causeth such as wisely resist it, not to have their treasure in the earth. In prayer great coldness and weariness of well-doing possesseth (as it were) this heart of ours, when by any occasion we have attempted it: anger, malice and revengement, in degree one exceeding the other, do easily appear to have their abode in this heart: pride of heart, though sometime privy, is one among the rest, which poisoneth our best actions, and soon ariseth when any good hath been done of us: the repining at the gifts of other, doth many times assault us: what barrenness and emptiness of God's grace is too commonly found in us, our woeful experience doth cause us to remember: unclean desires (among the rest) are here: an innumerable rabble of other unsavory, dangerous and carnal thoughts do swarm in us: and temperancy and moderation is so meanly reached unto, that we can hardly be merry without lightness; sad without unfruitful dumpishness; believing God without presuming; or fear him without some doubting's and inclining's to despairing. These here set down, with others many like unto then, having place in our hearts, and long continuance, without any occasion offered do set themselves a work in us; but especially by occasions do fearfully break out from us, we being (if we could mark it) not long without some of them whatsoever we go about. What

marvel though other causes did not go with them, if by means of these we should have our best actions blemished, yea poisoned, and our common behavior and course of life to be utterly unholy?

But now, when these shall be let loose in us, when they are not holden in as it were with bit and bridle, when they shall govern us, and not we them, but we become slaves and servants unto them: how can it be otherwise, but that our lives should give little light unto men and glory to God; and for all our profession of the Gospel, and the account that we make of it, yet that the fore-mentioned offenses be found in us? And this is the second cause why we bring forth no greater fruits of amendment. For when our hearts which in themselves are too evil, shall wander where they will without check, and feed themselves by occasions without controlment, little watching over them, or keeping in of them with diligent care and observing of them; full easily and right soon is this unsettledness and unprofitableness, which we complained of, engendered in us: and so, bringeth forth fruit accordingly, even like unto itself, as hath been said. Now for our own parts, we cannot but confess and remember against ourselves, that we have either not known many of these forenamed corruptions; and therefore could not use any violence against them: or if we have seen them in ourselves, yet have we made light matters of them, dallied with them, and delighted in them; and if time or other dealings have not brought us into the forgetfulness of them, yet with some sudden sighs and weak mislikings, they have been beheld of us: which hath been no decaying nor cutting off of so rank corruptions, but that they have budded forth again immediately, and so have soured our actions with their bitter leaven most dangerously. Whereas, if we had been jealous over them, if we had first cleansed and purged our hearts of them; if we, knowing that the greatest offenses before men, are first nourished in the heart to the provoking of God, and therefore had set ourselves against them:

we should have seen, that with much comfort to ourselves, in sound practice of duty, we should have proceeded in our Christian course, as being hereby at liberty from such bondage to our lusts; according to that which is written: I am. 4. Resist the devil and he shall fly. And in this estate we have pleased ourselves most commonly, because we have sought ease to the flesh, and have been loath to take such pains, as to abridge and cut off our manifold vain delights and fleshly liberties.

Oh, it hath been a death to us, when we must be roused out of our luskishness, and be enforced to grant, that such a life hath been but mere security: when we must confess much against ourselves (which hardly we have been brought unto;) and yet not rest there, till we have also obtained of ourselves to cast it up as an unsavory gorge. For when in our decay in grace we have feared secretly, that all hath not been well with us; and yet for all that, because we would feel no smart, and it was irksome and tedious to us, to think that we must enter into a straighter course: we have lain still in it as long as we could or durst: so truly is it said, That ease is a sweet poison and slayeth. We dreamed like the Apostles in their foolishness, of an earthly happiness: that it was the sweetest life of all, to think what riches and treasures we had already, and more hoped to come unto daily: to feed our appetite with thinking on our outward peace, in hoping (though without warrant) that it should be continued: to imagine how we might here be settled after our hearts desire, though we never perhaps should attain unto it; and not weighing, that although we at any time might, yet how rotten a foundation we had laid in so doing, which could not abide the wind and tempest. This ease it was which would have slain our souls, and was the cause of our so great looseness. An estate of life full of danger, and full of deceitfulness: with which (yet) none have ever so besotted themselves, (being holden captives of the devil at his pleasure) but

they who have escaped the danger of it, have as highly rejoiced; and, as from a bottomless dungeon, have kept themselves with all care, from falling again into it.

Now we falling into this fond ease, loathed to take such pains in running the race of Christianity, and in laboring to keep in, ourselves unto duty. When we had been any time unexercised with crosses and afflictions it was bitterness to think, that again we must come under them (so little did we hope for any comfortable or fruitful use of them:) and when we had been proved with them, for the most part we were uncomfortable in them. Whereby it appeared, that whatsoever we thought of ourselves and of our great profiting, that our strength was never great, because we were found weak in trials, Prov. 24:10. Hitherto it belongeth, that we were so untoward to the use of any good means: I speak not of the loose and negligent using of them, which was a fruit of this untowardness, (for that hath been spoken of before) but of our great unwillingness to break off our luskish and sottish course of life. As for example: to private prayer utterly unapt, when we should yet see much necessity of it: as being loath to awake ourselves out of our spiritual sleep, and loathing the painfulness of going about it. Against public meetings we felt sensible rebelling, as seeing that the looseness and liberty which we delighted in, must be made odious to us, and ourselves thereby disquieted: we feared, and were in a jealousy of our good brethren's company, by reason of an evil conscience, thinking that we must be of one mind with them; and that could not stand with our unsavory liking. And what a slavery is it, that we should bring ourselves to such a point, that we must obey our filthy lusts, and become servants to our vile rebellions? What madness is it, that we should deprive ourselves of the best things, and yet contented to abide so still? And by this it may appear, how many defaults are like to break out from



our lives, when such dangerous ease and looseness have their harbor in our hearts.

And yet another cause why so little good hath been done, we may remember to have been, that we have looked so narrowly to the lives of others, to gather hurt thereby; not remembering that we should follow none further then they follow Christ: of which, some being of the better sort, and others of the common, we have taken exceeding great hurt by them both. For these latter, when we see how they have many times continuance in outward peace and prosperity, so that they are merry, and take no thought about providing for the judgment day, neither are withholden from any intemperance of living; though we become not like unto them, yet as men not so fully persuading ourselves of their misery, we begin to think that it is but vain for us, to labor greatly after innocence, and to shine as lights, which (we see) is little regarded. And so we grow to justify our own course of life, as very sufficient and well liking to the Lord: yea and besides this, we gather some rubbish and scurf from them, by beholding, by dealing, and being too conversant with them. And if of these, some be less evil than others, and retain some points of honesty, and of better behavior in them; yet what a gross bewitching of ourselves is it, to compare ourselves with those, of whose happiness we have no persuasion? Now as the lives of this bad sort of men are laid too near us, and we may see that we are weakened in our course by then: so the lives of the first sort, even right good men, we either little or not at all do profit by; or (that which more is) we many times take hurt by them.

For as concerning their best actions and most commendable duties, we do not use to have them in reverent admiration, especially if the persons be daily amongst us: but we count them common things, and meeter for them then for us. Yea and we think, that we have some

other gifts and parts of our lives comparable to them: so that we can be content to go without those graces, and to lose the benefit of such good examples: which yet for this cause God setteth up as lights amongst us: that we might never please ourselves in our lives, till we had won this at our own hands, To frame ourselves after their examples, which are most gracious and godly amongst us. And further, we will not think, but that even such men have also manifold infirmities in them; though we know them not. But if we do, it is enough to persuade us, that even then when many things ought justly to be removed out of us, yet we are to be well thought of, and to be accounted commendable.

And these are the special causes, that so justly much fault may be found in our lives; unto the which briefly these may be added: that we have not been careful to be strangers to such companies, where we might be easily corrupted, or cooled and discouraged: neither taken occasion to be in good company, or to have made profit of the same when we were in it: but in a common manner spent such times, either in endless or needless worldly talk, or some other way unprofitably; rather framing ourselves to their humors, and to approve of their evil custom, then bethinking ourselves how to stop them.

A fifth cause hath been: that we have not labored to nourish our delight and joy in the benefit of our redemption: but diminishing the price of it, as though it were nothing so great and precious as it is commended to be: or soon forgetting it, for that it is of small account and little reckoning in the world; do feed upon vain and deceivable pleasures: and so taking part with the world, do also with the world grow unseasoned with grace: and therefore every such man after his manner becometh unprofitable. For when we begin to make a common thing of that assurance of our salvation, (which without

comparison is the chiefest and most precious treasure of all other) and do not maintain and preserve the preciousness of it by all good means, we must needs instead thereof, make account of other vain rejoicing, and so the care of godliness waxeth small.

And last of all, that we having sometimes felt ourselves unfit to be well occupied, we have fallen to idleness: and therewith acquainting ourselves, have (for the time) neither espied it to be a fault, and so resisted it in the beginning, by mislike of the same; neither have betaken ourselves to our callings to the hindering of the same; as being ministers, to attend to reading; or being private men, to labor every man as it hath behooved him. And thus much for the proof of the justness of our complaint, and of the causes thereof.

## **CHAP. 14.**

Of the second part of the Covenant, namely: The remedies against the complaint mentioned in the former Chapter.

Now forasmuch as in the weighing of the truth of these things, we could not but be grieved heartily: (as who can behold so great depth of corruption and the fruit of the same, so many ways with deadly uncomfortableness threatening his confusion, but must needs seek and use all possible means, speedily to pull himself out again?) we therefore immediately after the due consideration of our woeful condition, turned ourselves to bethink us, what remedies we might apply to this fall, if thereby we might possibly recover ourselves again: and also make them helps for hereafter, that we may as well continue in a fruitful and cheerful course unto the end of our lives; as at all, to return into the right way again. First therefore, we thought thus, and took order as followeth: that such of us, as did find our falls to be so great, and our offenses so dangerous, that either for our too

too great delight in them, or long lying therein, we could not by our usual prayers and humiliation, or by help of any ordinary and daily practices of repentance, by hearing the word and preparing ourselves for the Lord's supper; come to peace of conscience, and obtain confidence and godly boldness with the Lord: such (I say) should humble ourselves before the Lord with fasting and prayer, without which means such devils are hardly cast out. Especially, because we had let go the hold of our faith, and had suffered the same to fail in us; (which when it cometh to pass, what can there be in our life but mere unsavoriness; to speak of the best?) our fasting tended to this, that we might more forcibly pray for the recovery of our faith, and clear beholding of God's loving kindness restored to us again. That in such manner we being abased in his presence (as there is just cause that such should be) and believing again his old accustomed mercy, we might in some good measure be purged from our former unsavoriness, yea noisome uncleanness: and so made fit to renew our covenant with the Lord again, concerning more holy walking with him. And if we should find, that our hearts might be brought to unfeigned displeasure with ourselves for our former defaults, without fasting: then we determined to turn unto the Lord with all our hearts in sincerity, so as we might obtain comfort and release at his hands, as if fasting had been adjoined thereunto.

After this, our covenant was to know our hearts better: how evil they are: what falsehood, fickleness, lightness and such like naughtiness, and variety of corrupt affections we carry about us; that thereby we may be enforced to take more pain to weaken them daily. For we saw, that if we be not diligent to search them out, as by occasion we shall be moved to do, we shall both walk in continual unsettledness, and in an uncomfortable estate, because we can go about nothing, but someone of these or other shall be espied to carry us some way amiss in the same. And thus we purposed to note and find them out

in us, by a diligent view of and taking heed unto our ways, that so we may be in daily combat with them. A worthy work therefore and commendable we saw it, to take knowledge of them, and not to be content to be blind in the beholding of them (because we are neither easily brought to confess and see them; and yet that he which hideth them shall not prosper): that so we may behold more filth and venom in them, then we would have thought could have been in us. And we agreed, that if we should be unwilling to discover this pack, that even this willingness to hide them, is one of the most dangerous evils among the rest.

Now further, because the knowledge of our hearts, (if we stay there) I mean, of the manifold evil lusts of them, doth make us the more heady and greedy to fulfill them, when we know them by the law of God to be condemned in us: we have further faithfully determined to watch over them with all diligence, that neither any of those which have already been mentioned, neither any other (as far as we may know them) may lurk or have their abode within us with our liking, but that we may purge them out: and not those only which are apparently gross, but even such as are more secret, being not yet come near their ripeness: and therefore wheresoever we become, or in whatsoever we have to do, not to neglect this part of Christian duty; but especially there and then, where and when we suspect or have cause to fear more danger thereby: as in vehement and strong temptations, and grievous and long continuing afflictions, there to stand the more upon our watch, &c. So that whether we be in company or alone, in dealings abroad or matters at home, by one occasion or by other, yet still to have this purpose fixed in us, that as far as our frail memory will suffer us to remember it, we may go forward in the watching and observing of them. Which must the rather be done; because, as the heart is the fountain of life, and from thence we have it, That we live; so from thence we must fetch the

beginning of well living: from an evil and unclean heart, cometh no part of good life, no more than good fruit from an evil tree. But all the abomination of the life, even the most odious and vile, (as adultery, murder, idolatry, heresy, &c.) they have their beginning there, they are conceived and nourished there, they have their proceeding from thence; and God is long and grievously dishonored there for the most part, before man by the fruit of it can be or is offended.

So that as by the Romans law, it was straitly enacted: that their springs should be carefully preserved from all filth which might attain and poison them, that their rivers and water conduits might be sweet and wholesome: so it must necessarily be, that the heart of man being once renewed and made clean, it should be kept and continued so; that being a good treasury, good things may be brought out of it continually of all sorts, as occasion shall require. For here we take it as granted, that all which shall have their part in this covenant, or have already desired to have, must be renewed in their minds, and have their hearts purged and made clean by faith in the Son of God; whereby their sins may be defaced and all their old conversation pardoned, their souls through the same with most comfortable and sound peace enlightened; and so their hearts purified, both to will and also to live well and godly. Of the which making clean and purging the heart, as this is no fit place to speak: so they must have learned it and have attained to it who are here mentioned, that is, such as have covenanted unfeignedly to watch and observe the same. Therefore (to return) seeing the heart is a deep dungeon and pit, full of all unclean thoughts, and yet deceiving men; so that they shall think far otherwise, and suspect no such thing (as 1. King. 15:8.) seeing in all their actions someone or other portion of it is ready to corrupt and stain even the best of them, so that not the holiest parts of God's worship can purely and holily be fulfilled

without the careful holding in of it: it is worthily and for just cause, made one part of this wholesome remedy of the well ordering of our lives. So that, if any be given to seek the liberty which God hath not allowed him, to let loose his heart after any folly and vanity, and counteth it too great streightness and precise curiousness to keep a dominion and a superiority over it, so as he might thereby bring it into subjection; he is justly to be pitied, if he cannot be otherwise persuaded: but if he think that way to build up a godly life, until the Lord call back his word (which now standeth for a perfect direction of well living) he shall never attain to that which he seeketh.

Now this watching over the heart, that it may be with the more fruit, must have accompanying it a suspicious and jealous fear, lest at any time it break forth into such delights as are worldly, carnal, &c. Of the which fear, for the great good that it doth those who are led by it, the wise man saith: Blessed is the man that feareth always, that is, his evil heart in one point or other, and therefore taketh the more pain about it. This being so far to be understood and practiced, as our weakness will give leave, (i. so as we do not willingly nourish idleness and unprofitable liberty and looseness in us) we are to take view of the fruit which it bringeth us; and to measure by days, by weeks, and so forward, what ease to our consciences, what cheerfulness to our souls, and what better fruit in walking in our callings more than we were wont, is reaped of us and enjoyed. And when we shall see that there is no comparison betwixt the one and other: that is, betwixt a wandering heart, and betwixt a circumspect care, we may more fully be resolved to hold out in this course still: because although much foolish and fleshly licentiousness is forgone, (which is naturally most desired) yet it frameth and maketh us fit for the Lord, and weaneth us more and more from the world, and is a mean by which with great ease and readiness we go on in our Christian course. For this is that which we hope for hereby. And

there shall be no doubt, but when the meditations of our hearts shall please the Lord, that the words of our mouths, and the practice of our lives shall also be acceptable in his sight. To conclude this point: it is again to be remembered, that we wean our heart from earthly delights: which oftentimes tickling it with a pleasant sweetness, do steal it away from heavenly things, and hold it here below: and so by little and little bring it to find a contentation here, and breed a wearisomeness in that godly life. And further, that we be very wary that our hearts be not stolen from a liking of good ways, neither brought out of frame by loathing our duties, and so deprived of their peace: especially, that we be not hurt nor wounded that way, where there is greatest cause of fear and danger: nor brought into subjection to those sins, to the which by nature we be most inclined: as to the love of the world, uncleanness, breaking off of brotherly affection, &c. And here, if at any time we should be overtaken, (which is not to be doubted of, no not of the most circumspect and best advised) we resolutely purposed not to sleep nor slumber in our sin, neither promise to ourselves forgiveness too easily: but first to awake ourselves, to be amazed that we should let go the strength and hold which once we had; to rebuke and check ourselves sharply, till shame and sorrow for so offending, may humble us: and then we may be bold to assure our souls, having an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous, that we are received of him again.

And to the end, that in this work we may more happily go forward, and this watch be the better kept: our purpose was to avoid carefully all outward hindrances, and to avoid occasions of quenching God's spirit in us, as we shall have wisdom to see them: as, too far entering into dealings or talk about the world, to call ourselves back from all excess that way: also unprofitable and dangerous company and acquaintance, any unnecessary and idle talk: and whatsoever else like unto these. And contrarily, to be careful to continue with



diligence and delight, not only the exercise and use of such holy means of meditation and prayer, as well by ourselves as with others also, reading, hearing and conference, &c. but also with minds to reap fruit by the same: which is not always intended, nor sought for so oft as the things themselves are used. As for example: seeing the readiest and best way to nourish and continue this holy desire, and careful watching over our hearts, is increase of knowledge, by the help of hearing and reading (for zealous and holy affections are like a flame of fire, which without the adding and putting to of wood, as new matter, will soon be quenched and extinguished; so will our looking to our hearts, and observing of them, be loosely and lightly continued:) it is our purpose to stir up ourselves with more earnestness hereunto, because we know that we shall otherwise frustrate and make vain our whole covenant.

That is to say, as followeth: We do acknowledge, that our negligence and unreverence in these, have so greatly deprived us of fruit in understanding and judgment, as well as other ways, that before our hearing we trust we shall prepare our hearts by casting off that which would hinder us: namely, rebellious gainsaying the truth, security, hardness, worldly affections, &c. that with meekness and teachableness, we will bring honest and good hearts to the hearing of the word; and in the action itself, be attentive, and marking that which shall be taught, so as it may work in us, and raise up answerable affections to that which we shall hear; as joy by comfortable doctrine, fear by that which moveth fear, &c. and after we have heard, we will beware that it perish not in us through our own default or negligence, in minding other matters more than that which we have heard (whereby we should bury it in forgetfulness:) but carefully seek opportunity to muse upon it by ourselves; or commune of it with others, as our small ability will suffer us; or both. And when we shall have learned to put in practice this part of the

remedy, we intend to mark how this with the former doth bring our minds better in frame: that we may both take encouragement (in beholding any fruit) to continue it; and in seeing the contrary, to mark where the fault lieth, that it may be removed.

And to sharpen our desire to hear and read the more willingly, seeing there is much untowardness in our nature to such exercises, and we have strong temptations to persuade us that it is as needless, as we feel it irksome: we have seen it necessary for us to stir up our dullness, not only by the commandment of God, that we should search the Scriptures, (and so, read then) and that we should give ear daily to the Apostles doctrine, (and therefore hear the same in season and out of season, that by both, the word of God may dwell plentifully in us;) but also to have in fresh memory the power of the Scriptures: which, besides that they are able to save our souls, so they can fill us with goodness and comfort every way, as we shall have need, and have done so often in times past unto us. For many times we have been brought so low in feeling of any present comfort; to such a barrenness and emptiness of all good instructions; sometime (which was worst of all) to such an unsavoriness in the good things of God's word, and so unapt and untoward to them; that we thought in our weakness it would never be otherwise with us: yet when we have come again to the ministry of the word, the Lord hath scattered our darkness, raised us out of our deceivable dumps and drowsiness, and showed us joy and comfort again: so that we have been taught thereby, that this is the fountain which refresheth us in our insatiable thirsts, and cooleth the heat of our sin; and finally, giveth greater grace, then Satan for all his subtleties and tyranny.

And further, because experience hath taught us that we easily lose that in the world amongst the manifold encumbrances, discouragements and dealings thereof, which we learned of the Lord

by any good means; we have faithfully covenanted for the better keeping of our hearts watchful, and safe from evil, once in the day (if it be possible) to set apart a time from all other law full and necessary duties, for meditation and private prayer, to the seasoning of our hearts with grace, and to the stablishing of them against all temptations, afflictions and other hindrances. Not, to free ourselves hereby from other times of communing with the Lord, as occasions shall be offered, and necessity shall require: but because our untoward harts would otherwise draw us altogether to break off this duty, if we should not determine of some special time; therefore one quarter of an hour, or as everyone shall find himself able, we have seen meet to appoint hereunto, if we can have good opportunity; that is to say, if God give us minds fitly disposed thereto, and minister profitable and plentiful matter accordingly: or if we fail in both, so much the more to take occasion by our present wants and infirmity, to repair unto God.

And because the morning when we arise, is both meetest to be employed that way, as wherein our minds are best able to think upon heavenly matters, when we have not yet been about our worldly affairs; and for the most people, the best time that may be spared: therefore we have purposed to allot the first part of the day thereunto, with this proviso, that if through necessary occasions we should be hindered from it, we may yet carefully perform it on some other part of the day. And although at the first we shall see some untoward beginnings herein, by which, discouragement from the continuance hereof might arise, yet we resolved with our selves, that it is some profiting to begin, though in weakness: and there is hope that good proceedings, and great, shall come even of small beginnings, being faithfully entered into. And if by these means we should not become better seasoned in our hearts, it is little to be hoped for, that other means should do us the good that we have need

of. But when the day is thus begun, that wisdom communeth with us in the morning, and awaketh us with heavenly salutations, we are for the most part kept more sober, and continent from all out-straying the whole day following: for when good things, either concerning the life to come and the glory of it, or the vanity and change of this present life, are deeply digested and thoroughly thought upon, it is no small occasion to make us more stranger-like to this present world, and to carry about us greater freedom over our secret corruptions.

And because it is hard, especially for private persons to have always matter in a readiness, which is profitable to meditate upon: (for he that shall be furnished here withal, must be one which hath a daily observation of his life, without the which grace, even the learned sort shall be to seek:) therefore some points were set down for those which are least able to help themselves; that by some few of those which are very fit and available, they may set themselves on work, and by them learn to find out others like unto them, which do most nearly tend to the well ordering of the life. By which means appointed and found out for their help and furtherance, if yet unfitness of mind and an untoward heart shall hold them back, being troubled with cares of the world, or deceived with dreams of vain pleasures (which make the meditation of heavenly matters loathsome:) they are to know, that they can have no better occasion offered them to the performing of this duty, then for them to complain of, and seek redress even against this evil and earthly heart, of which they presently complain: and as they can bring that under, so to proceed in musing of, and praying for such grace as they shall see most needful.

Lastly, we concluded to observe, what fruit we reap by these remedies: what release of our strong and usual maladies and

diseases: what weakening of any such lusts, as sometimes had strongly prevailed against us: Also what liking we find of this manner of dealing with our selves; or contrarily, whether we feel any watchfulness over our hearts throughout the day, since we entered into this covenant: and whether any bettering of our ways by the same: whether in company we have been more wary of taking or doing good according to the occasion offered: in our dealings, more careful not to be found offensive. And weekly, and by days, to mark it, and to communicate our estate with some faithful brother, with whom we may freely and faithfully open and impart our whole course: what means, and how far forth we use them: what we see cause to complain of: and what is more required of us, then that which we do: that thus we may be set forward, counseled and confirmed; and seeing what course we ought to take for the bringing of this to pass, we may be stablished in a Christian life. For it doth not a little help to have this communion with some. Also, that we ourselves should be helpers of others, where either any do require the same duty of us, or through bashfulness dare not be bold, or through simplicity cannot do it: yet we seeing that they stand in need of such counsel and direction, should through love show them what we can, and what we have learned in this behalf. And here we purposed for the hope of the great fruit of this communion, to avoid strangeness: which as it breaketh off all profit betwixt us, so it giveth fear of some secret conceitedness and that much love is wanting. This direction, if it be read over (as we shall see cause and may do it conveniently) with a mind desirous as well to see what is amiss in us, as also in faithfulness to use these remedies: we may be bold (the Lord working by means) to assure our selves, that we shall not labor herein in vain. And when we have attained hereto, we determined not to rest in that, but to be directed still by such rules as God's word doth minister to us.

Now having set down remedies, by which we may raise up ourselves out of any declining's from a godly life, we added some reasons to persuade us thereto, for as much as we may be sure that hindrances and discouragements enough shall meet with us to withhold us. First this: that by such a course and seeking to walk with God, as the former remedies do direct us unto, we are brought to a most sweet and holy communion with the Lord: in comparison whereof, nothing is to be desired. For it is an honor and prerogative which the world neither knoweth, neither can attain unto, To get principality over him, who is the prince of the world, that is, the devil; and to obtain grace against our own evil hearts in well ruling them: which is a greater honor, then to subdue kingdoms. Also that hereby we have liberty, with godly boldness to come before the Lord in our complaints and prayers; being assured, that whatsoever we shall ask of him according to his will, it shall be granted us: and that our peace and comfort hereby is so great, that none who hath but even tasted of it, would change his estate for any other: and that the conscience of such men is not beaten and disquieted with hellish and fearful torments. In this case a man need not fear malicious accusations, because he hath been circumspect in looking to his ways: and therefore (deservedly) evil speeches can take no hold of him; seeing he that is careful to please God, cannot justly incur the rebukes of men. As for evil tidings, he is free from the fear of them, because he hath armed himself to look for the hardest. And they who like not this state, (which all things considered, shall be found to be the richest part and best portion) they must feed themselves with folly, and take their fill in vanity, till their misery overtake them in the mid-way, and destruction meet with them when they little think upon it.

Moreover, howsoever this endeavoring after a godly life, hath ever of the world been little regarded; yet the happiest and men of greatest

commendation for godliness, have always preferred it, and made it as the flower of their garland, and the crown of their rejoicing: we have a cloud of witnesses, and not all in one age, who have walked with God, even from Enoch and thereabout to this day, who testified this daily looking to their lives, to be the best thing of all. Now if by these and such like persuasions we be brought to like of it, we faithfully covenanted with ourselves to use these remedies which have been set down for continuance, and to make our beginnings sound and substantial; so as they may be able to bear and uphold the weight of all that shall press them down. For although our temptations be strong and many, yet may none of them prevail thus far, as to make us break off this our happy covenant: for if we be not strongly armed against this, we shall easily find that hindrances enough will arise, which will quickly weaken the power of our best purposes, and frustrate all that we have taken in hand. Here will inward lets come in our way; and those, of many sorts: as, to think it more then needeth to live thus: also that many who are godly, do not thus: the inordinate love of some special sin may withhold us: and much dullness, unprofitableness and rebellion, may make us utterly unable to hold forth this course. Many outward discouragements also and hindrances will be ready here to stand in our way; as household troubles, and disquietness by them, disorder in servants and children, untowardness and ill success in business, want of blessing sometimes where it was hoped for, losses, &c. also much toiling and occupying ourselves about these things below, with neglect of our heavenly and Christian calling. These are some of a great number, and the commonest whereby holy duties do most easily grow out of place and use with us. Let this rule therefore (said we) be well regarded of us, and that which followeth shall be the easier: for many loathsome weariness's will in short time arise, which (if it be possible) will break us off from this enterprise.

After this, we said: that if we with diligence continue it, we must beware we make not a common thing of it; so as, though we use it, yet no fruit nor blessing return to us by it. The which as it falleth out most usually in the doing of good things, so in this the best of others, it is most to be feared. In the first setting upon many duties some cheerfulness may be seen in us, and some time and travel bestowed: but alas, within a very short time, we grow full of them: they become irksome and tedious to us; and though we do not utterly break them off, yet we may perceive, that without any great sweetness and delight we go about them. The reason hereof is, that our fleshly hearts can like of no good thing long. If therefore either of these two ways, we deprive ourselves of the benefit of growing forward by these forenamed remedies: that is, by the negligent using of them, or the leaving off of them; yet the fault must be quickly espied, and not long lain in: for that is more dangerous, then can easily be believed.

To the better attaining hereof, we may understand, that we may grow to a commonness in a good thing two ways: either when we be in prosperity; in which estate, it will be very hard to see our great need to use fervency and zeal in holy duties and services of God, when we see variety of earthly delights set before us to enjoy; and we without controlment of any person, may take our fill of them. Therefore if in this estate, we perceive any loathsomeness of well doing to grow upon us, we must charge ourselves with fickleness, inconstancy, falsehood against God, secret dissembling, unfaithfulness, &c. If we should be content thus to fall from the Lord; and if we be not ready without contradiction to stir up ourselves to a fruitful and cheerful use of Christian means again; yea, if we be the worse for God's benefits: we must look that he will take them from us, and cause us to yield him other manner of fruits by the want of them. Also we must here call to mind, whiles with delight we served the Lord, what comfort and godly boldness with him we found: which now, if we



begin to decline from him, we can enjoy no more, but may look for some such recompense as shall be meet for revolvers: yea and we must tell this (we said) to our own hearts without flattery, that if we wax weary of the Lord at our pleasure, it is to be feared, and that justly, that he will shake us off in our fear and necessity, and we shall not dare to set upon this Christian care again, if once we be glutted with it; and though we do, yet shall we not find it easy for us to go forward, although we set upon it again, but that one time or other we shall be like to be driven back: which judgment is fearful above many, and next unto despair. We must think that the Lord dealeth tenderly with us, if we may have liberty to glorify him by manifold encouragements, in outward blessings: whereas many have thought it a singular privilege and great kindness of his towards them, that they may do it in imprisonment, in bonds, in poverty, in reproach, &c. And generally, we ought to think, that if we thus use his benefits, that we grow more undutiful towards him then many which want them, it is time for him (as hath been said) to take them from us, and to bestow them upon such as will yield and render unto him better fruit of them. And if this should be any occasion of licentiousness to us, that many, yea, the most of such as have a great portion in earthly commodities, do delight in them, and take them not to be given them of God to the end that they should live more holily, or be the fruitfuller in Christian duties by them: we must answer to ourselves thus again, that we never were taught it of God, to follow examples, no not of the best men, contrary to express rules of Scripture; much less, the evil examples of the multitude, and common sort of such as reject all Scripture.

Now though we fall not this way by means of our prosperity, (for that were very gross) yet if we should more covertly deceive ourselves by thinking thus, that we have sufficiently profited by this direction now, and therefore may cease; and neglecting to see our wants,

dangers, infirmities and discouragements which are in our way (as in time past) and so cast off this travel: against these deceiving's of our hearts, we must resolutely be persuaded of the manifold perils outward and inward, which are in our lives; which full soon (if we grow cold and remiss in a godly life) do begin to take hold of us: and therefore to keep ourselves well whiles we be well. And thus we must use ourselves, as hath now been set down, that we may not use the practices of godliness after a common manner. But many, whiles the Lord reacheth forth encouragements to them, and filleth their lives with outward blessings, do accustom themselves to some commendable course: who when God changeth their prosperous estate, do immediately change with it; that is to say, whiles dangers and great afflictions take hold of their lives, they are so distressed and grieved for them, that they grow froward, impatient and disquieted thereby, and are utterly unfit to continue such godly means as before they used, for the growing forward in a godly life. Hereby is great danger to be feared: therefore if possibly by any of God's chastisements we should fall thus far; yet we must confess such slips with grief, and with shame and astonishment behold our falls, and settle no peace in our hearts, till we have returned and recovered our strength again, and so return to our first estate again: which also most certainly we shall, if with the servants of God in all ages (as the Israelites, 1. Sam. 7:4. Hester and Mardocheus, Hester. 4, Jehoshaphat, 2. King. 20, and others) we confess our sins with melting and broken hearts, yea our particular sins of murmuring, impatience, fretting and such like; that so we may be received of our heavenly father for his Christ's sake, to mercy and forgiveness.

# THE SIXTH TREATISE,

SHOWETH WHAT PRIVILEGES BELONG TO EVERY TRUE  
CHRISTIAN: AND HOW HE MAY HAVE HIS PART IN THEM.

## CHAP. 1.

Of the sum of this Treatise: the reasons why it is set out: the order of it: and of the diverse kinds of privileges.

THE next thing which cometh in place to be spoken of, is concerning the privileges and liberties, which God hath bequeathed unto and freely bestowed upon his people and beloved servants. I do not mean any of his benefits which he suffereth the ungodly to enjoy, (which yet are far more sweet and savory to his children than to them) but I mean those which are peculiar to the faithful, whereof the other have no part nor portion. The which, although all the faithful enjoy not, and therefore feel not so great contentation in their lives as they might do, yet they have free grant and liberty of the Lord so to do, if they knew the will of God in that behalf; or if knowing it, they be not holden back through unbelief, as being strongly persuaded that they do not belong unto them. I know that of those many and great blessings which the children of God partake, some are peculiar and proper to some in respect of their callings, offices and places, which are not common to all: but I intend to make mention only of those, which one may possess (although not in a like measure) as well as another.

And this I do for sundry and diverse causes: partly, that the godly may see their riches in some sort as well as other men know theirs; and knowing them, may enjoy them to their great contentation, which few of them do as they might: and that if by any occasion they should be, either by the baits of this world, by their own forgetfulness, faint-heartedness, distrust or other weakness of their own, or by Satan's malice, put out of the possession of them, or any of them; yet by considering and remembering these or some of them, they might be able to return home again from whence they strayed, and that more easily and willingly than many do, or think it possible for them to do by any means; especially when they shall see that wheresoever they cast their delight, yet they shall be driven with weariness to say, that they find nowhere so good liking and safety, as at home, I mean in God's house, that is, under his nurture and government.

Another cause why I set down these privileges of God's servants, is, that the wicked which wander from God, and are not in his favor, may see, what they go without, and what great good things they deprive themselves of, by their sins. By forgoing of the which, (to say nothing of the deceivable and miserable estate wherein they live) if they should but weigh and consider what they lose and forgo, which others enjoy, and they likewise might, it would deeply vex their hearts as oft as they should think of it: even as in hell the reprobate shall find this not the least part of their torment, to see others in so happy condition, which they are utterly cut off from all hope of attaining to.

Lastly, that I may hereby (if possibly) help to bring the Christian life into some better credit and account, both with the one and with the other: which to my no less grief than admiration, I see to lie as dead wares little asked after, in the world. For many, even of the godly, do

not esteem of the Christian life, and of the wisdom which should govern us, as they ought to do, that is to say, as of a treasure more to be desired than any earthly thing, be it honor, wealth, pleasure, and that at all times. And as for the ungodly they have no liking of it, but the most of them scorn, deface, abhor, and dissuade from it, counting it precisism and puritanism, truly and conscionably to go about to practice it, and throughout their lives to set themselves to bring forth the fruits of it, when yet there is no happiness in any other estate; for into it alone, (as hath been said) do all the heavenly and excellent privileges fall.

If any, on whom this rebuke doth justly take hold, shall contrarily answer, that they do honor the Christian life and delight in it, although they do mislike indeed (they say) that men should be to precise in urging others to duty, and in framing themselves to a certain kind of excellency and singularity above others: I say, let such clear themselves from fault by this, that they acknowledge that God hath bequeathed to his dear children better things than the world hath; and therefore that such as believe this, and have a part in it, cannot content themselves to honor God so slightly as they do which have them not, but acknowledge that they owe much more than they can perform, when they have done all that they can: also let them endeavor to have in common these privileges with the rest of God's servants, and let them thus prove, that they delight in godliness indeed: so shall they cease from their speeches, and agree with us, and have good warrant of their safety and welfare; and otherwise, I mean until they do so, they shall but bite at them who are in better case than themselves. This shall suffice in general, to have spoken of the privileges of the faithful, and of the reasons why I make this Treatise of them.

Now particularly I will set down some of the chief (for who can mention all?) of the which though some have been made mention of by occasion in other places of this book: yet seeing they have not been handled of purpose, and that every Reader cannot gather them together, nor know them to be so, nor have them before him in view at once, except they be spoken of to this end, to show the beauty and price of them; therefore they being so necessary to be known and enjoyed, I count it no lost labor to do it. And for more ease and less tediousness in reading of them, because they are many, I will bring them all to these two heads.

The first kind of our privileges and prerogatives, which true Christians have allowed and allotted to them of God, are such as be enjoyed in this present world, wherein they have many things to encourage them to a cheerful honoring of God. The second sort, is of those liberties and peculiar blessings, which God hath in store for them in the life to come: which with the former being daily weighed and duly considered, do in marvelous manner set before them and commend to them the singular love of God, and make them see themselves so beholding to him, that they are set forward with exceeding cheerfulness in their Christian course and warfare.

## **CHAP. 2.**

Of the first privilege: That the believers may know in this world, that they have eternal life.

Of the first sort, this is one (which the rich men of the world, who want it, cannot purchase with all their substance:) I mean, that they may know and be persuaded that they are beloved of God, and that their names are written in heaven, and therefore although they be strangers here for a while, yet that they shall undoubtedly be saved;

whiles in the mean season, others who are far from it, do please themselves with laughing at their folly, sauciness and madness (as they count it) for that they fancy such things to themselves. Whereby they declare (in thinking there are no such to whom this is revealed) what a privilege it is, to know so much of God's will and mind, to be partakers of so great a treasure, as the mighty ones do confess is utterly hidden from them. Now for proof of it, that God alloweth them to know it, what is more manifest than this which is written by Saint John? Behold, what love the father hath given to us, that we should be called the sons of God. And again: As many as received him, to them he gave prerogative to be the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name. Also: These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the son of God, that ye may know, that ye have eternal life, &c. But this matter having been largely handled in the first chapter, may with fewer proofs satisfy such as desire to hear more of it.

Therefore as this is not to be doubted of, that true Christians know themselves, or may by some evidences, (even the weakest) to be beloved of God, and that they shall be saved: so how great a privilege this is, let them learn (who set little by it) of Christ himself, who hath valued it at a greater price then all the world: What shall it profit a man though he should win the whole world, if he loose his own soul? Or what shall a man give for recompense of his soul? Now if the knowing of this secret, that God loveth us, be a privilege of so great account, yea though a man should know it but dimly, and if he should know it but once in all his life: what a manner of privilege then is this to be accounted, that we may grow from faith to faith, and from a darker knowledge of it to a clearer from day today, and that, with better assurance then we hold anything in this life by seal, writing, witness, or any other way that law can devise? For indeed the benefit of knowing this so great a treasure to be fallen us, were by

many degrees less, if it were, when it is once known to us, afterward to be doubted of and called into question again, and that our assurance might not both grow greater, and daily continuance of the same be obtained.

But thanks be to God for his unspeakable mercy, who hath provided, that the longer we live, the better we may know it. For the longer that we have believed God's promise, and been acquainted with it, who doubteth, but that we may much more clearly be persuaded of it, then in former times when we first believed, and when we had not as yet so often considered it, nor so deeply weighed what might hinder and weaken our faith, or come against it? For at the first enlightening of our hearts with this sun-shine of faith, we have many mists and clouds cast before our eyes, to dim and darken it: many doubts arising from our own weakness, unworthiness and feeling of our sins when we have had as yet little experience of God's tender compassion and care over us, or at least when little marked of us; much fear troubleth us then, because we see many things to accuse us, and for that we do not many duties which we hear taught unto us; but when we are better acquainted with him, we more easily believe, that he will forgive them all unto us. And as the young child is not able to stand and go alone, till time hath brought more strength: even so it fareth with us. But when we have after longer time seen the will and mind of God to be constant and unchangeable, our own care to please God to be unfeigned though imperfect (more than which nothing is required of us) and that the best of God's servants have had the same infirmities as well as we, and that we have liberty, when we see our weakness to seek pardon of the same at the hands of our good God; these and such like considerations after longer time, when we have oft weighed, God hath given us greater strength of faith, and strengthened us to wax more confident, even as we have withal become more humble and obedient. So far is it off, that this



assurance the longer time we have enjoyed it, should be further off from us.

And as for that many object, that sundry of God's children, after they have known it, do fall to doubt of it after, this gainsaith not that which I affirm. For that it may be and is thus, I deny not; the devils subtlety and malice being stronger than men have faith to resist it. But the truth is, that as the godly are renewed but in part: so through corruption they may wax weary oftentimes of that care which should procure their welfare, and may (as no doubt but many do) neglect to nourish their faith daily, and slake their delight in using reverently the best means for the conforming of the same: and therefore, such do the oftener taste of the hard diet of other men, because they will sometimes choose to follow their ways.

Besides, there are others which though they offend not that way, yet they give too much place to distrust, having no just cause, by an evil conscience, which is the greatest enemy to faith: and hereby they deprive themselves of the benefit of this faith and confidence. Which kind of people must labor to stay themselves by the persuasion of such Scripture as is written of purpose for their comfort, as: Take my yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest to your souls. also: A contrite heart God will not despise, &c. Mat. 11:29. Psal. 51:17. Mat. 12:20. Psa. 43:5. But to return, seeing they may hold and abide in God's love, and hold fast this knowledge of it, the longer they live, they see this must be granted them also: That none shall take them out of the Lord's hands or custody, but that he will care for them unto the resurrection day.

Wherein this is a further degree flowing from the former, that this love of God being shed into their hearts plentifully by the holy Ghost, it maketh them more quiet, joyful and better satisfied, then all that

can be desired of them besides, according to that which Saint Peter saith: Though we see him not, yet we believe in him, and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious. For what is there in the world, that can raise the like joy in our hearts, as this, that we know that we shall see the good pleasures of the Lord in the land of the living (that is, in his militant church here) and have an house not made with hands, but eternal, in his triumphant hereafter? Who doeth not see, as the former ages have found and felt, and they who yet remain on earth shall find, that to all other things, even the best, there is an appointed end? And therefore the joy that men conceive for them, is but flitting and momentary, not unspeakable and everlasting. So that the peace and joy which arise from the certainty of our salvation, is worthily reckoned as a singular privilege, in as much, as it doeth not only exceed all worldly treasures; but also, because it is proper to the children of God, and the other have no part in it.

And further, this should better appear, how great a privilege it is to be beloved of God, if we could possibly conceive the dreadful fear of the reprobate in desperation, and how little comfort such an one taketh in all his wealth and delights which he hath in this world (in whatsoever price and account they are with fools:) but would give them all for one quarter of an hours feeling of God's loving kindness and sweet countenance towards him, if it could be enjoyed, and the sound peace and comfort that cometh with it. And therefore if any will know the benefit and greatness of this privilege, let him ask of them, who having hardened their hearts through unbelief, are grown into despair: who with wearisome sighs and groans, that cannot be expressed, do think with themselves and speak many times: Oh how happy are those which are saved? Yea, and what would they give, if they had it, how many thousand worlds, for a part in God's kingdom? Or if the damned souls in hell could speak, they would tell you, whether this be a prerogative, to be kept so safely from the torments

thereof, and honored with the assurance of heaven and happiness; as partly may be gathered by that which Saint Luke writeth of the Epicure in the Gospel, saying: Oh that the tip of a finger were dipped in water to cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. And without it, (I mean, where this is not enjoyed) I do marvel, that vain, deceivable and transitory, yea loathsome and filthy pleasures are so hunted after, as they be: even till they justle out all remembrance and regard of heavenly things altogether. And this sweet liberty peculiar to God's children, which I now speak of, is so much the greater by this, that we may enjoy it all the day long, and so throughout our life, and are not stinted nor tied to one hour or time wherein we may possess it: and also because the longer time we be partakers of it, the sweeter it is unto us, seeing we do the better know the benefit of it, and that none hath power to deprive us of it. And thus much of the first privilege; namely, The certainty of our salvation, whiles we are in this life: which, if we weigh thoroughly what we have been and what we have deserved, will (I think) be thought no small nor mean gift, but great and wonderful, and yet proper to the believers: so that all people which shall understand it, may worthily and for good cause commend the Christians life, to the which it properly pertaineth, and wish and travel to embrace and be partakers of it most willingly; even as we read, that in ages past it was said by the Lord, that ten men out of all languages of the nations, shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, and say: We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you, Zach. 8:23. And if there were no other privilege, but this one to be enjoyed, whiles we live here; yet were our portion exceeding great, seeing so many thousands who hear of it would think their estate right happy and good, if after many years pain and heaviness in seeking it, they might enjoy it.

But, glory be to God on high, these are not all the precious benefits and prerogatives, which God hath willingly bequeathed his servants,

besides all other outward blessings which they have in common with the unbelievers. Of these therefore, or some of them, which either they do, or may enjoy daily in the several actions and parts of their lives, to make the same well pleasing to God, acceptable to men, and more easy and sweet to themselves than the most do find them; of these (I say) it followeth next to say something.

### **CHAP. 3.**

Of the second Privilege: namely, That God is with his always after he hath assured them of his favor.

But to pass to the second: if they might only know, that they shall be saved after they depart out of this world, and should in the meanwhile be neglected and left as orphans, desolate and exposed to all injuries and discomforts, the privilege, which I have spoken of, should be the less (although nothing is to be compared unto it:) but God hath promised over and beside that, to have a fatherly care over them, even in this life also, and to testify his love plentifully unto them many other ways: which special care he hath not of other, though he suffereth them to live. 1. Tim. 4:10. Also he is their shelter from tempests and storms of troubles; and keepeth them safe under his protection, as the hen doth the chickens under her wing: yea, he keepeth them as the apple of his eye; and counteth them his friends, communicating with them his secrets, and declaring and making known to them the hidden treasures of his kingdom, and in every estate will save and uphold them by his providence: so that they may prosper and be well liking in respect of other, though they have all outward abundance. And if God who is rich in all good things and hath all power in his hands, be their shepherd, what can they want? If he be with them (as he is) who can be against them? If he honor

them, whose disgracing of them can hurt them? Yea, if he make them blessed, who can deprive them of it?

But when I have said what I can of their estate, I must confess I have said little, so great and precious are the particular prerogatives which they have bequeathed unto them. And yet behold, in this high account they are with God always, when his anger is kindled against other which are his enemies. And what comfort may be conceived by the believing, considering and applying of all these unto the faithful heart? And that I may the easilier persuade the weak Christian, that these things are not little, consider if any one of these commodities, which I have said, do, by God's free grant, pertain to the believers, that by someone they may value and esteem the rest: consider therefore, first the honor that they have in being called The servants of God (than the which title and name the angels have no greater) to declare the honor that goeth with it: which partly may appear by another comparison, and that also more familiar to us. For look, how high and honorable the office and place is, that is enjoyed under a Prince (whither it be L. Chancellor, Treasurer, or the like) more than the same is under an inferior person: even so by many degrees, the honor of being servant unto the most high, is far greater than all other which here may be attained.

And yet as though this were not enough to be called the servants of the Almighty, Christ himself setteth out their estate to be yet more glorious, when he saith: I have not called you servants but friends, to whom I have communicated my secrets and mind, unto the which a servant is not commonly admitted. And yet even this is not so admirable, if it be laid with that which in another place is written: That God hath adopted us to be his sons and heirs, yea fellow-heirs with Christ himself. Not much unlike hereunto, is that which is written in another place: If ye will keep my commandments, ye shall

be to me the most precious of all the earth, though all the earth be mine. If the godly be his precious treasure, how can they but be delighted in of him, safely kept also, and preserved from all that might annoy them? And being so dear unto him, how will he suffer them to want anything that is good? And therefore Kings for their honor they are called, though not earthly, inferior to the angels indeed; but yet, through hope, the most precious people among all nations, though all the earth be his: whereby they rule over Satan the prince of this world, by faith, and tread under their feet the kingdom of darkness and sin, and so become conquerors over him and the world. For the Scripture teacheth them this wisdom, the spirit giveth them this grace, and witnesseth this to be true, that he which hath faith, overcometh the world: that is, maketh that, which is in it, as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, to be subject to him. An honor which Kings and Princes, for the most part, attain not unto: for many of them as well as of others, worship the beast, and offer to him their crown, and willingly submit themselves to his slavery. And this honor which he bequeatheth to his faithful ones, is one commodity and fruit of his provident care and fatherly regard that he hath over them.

And yet in that there is no end of this, but that he will continue it towards them throughout their life, and that in more certainty and assurance, it is so much the more to be had in admiration: whereas in the meanwhile, they who are none of his, nor nurtured in his family, which is his church, cannot enjoy the least part of this liberty, they cannot believe nor be persuaded of any such thing at any time, neither dare they promise to themselves, that he will be with them, and be a shelter unto them; but for want thereof they smart, being hardened in their hearts, and let loose after their own desire, to commit any sin that their heart lusteth after, even with greediness;

and that, because the lord hath not that especial care over them, that he hath over his own beloved ones to keep them from it.

This prerogative (I say) the wicked men of the world, and unregenerate, not only have not while they remain in that estate, neither do so much as fervently and constantly desire it, nor cannot; being no more able, then the blind man is to see, or the new borne child to walk: and therefore instead of these liberties they are still in bondage, and for the most sweet dainties of Gods children, they are fed with draff, even with fancies, dreams and deceivable pleasures. But contrariwise, that which was spoken to Mary the mother of Jesus, thou being freely beloved of the lord, he is ever with thee afterwards, to preserve thee whom he hath loved: the same may be verified of all Gods children; after he hath once received them into favor, forgiving them all their sins, he is with them ever after, to watch over and care for them; that so they may be presented safe before him, when he shall appear for their everlasting deliverance.

By which it may be seen, how excellent and how much to be desired, the estate of the poorest of God's children is, above the flourishing youth that liveth at hearts ease, or the mightiest monarch or prince that is unreformed. It might seem therefore, that even this honor that God giveth to his servants, which I have already spoken of, were enough. And I confess, that if I might have had my choice, when I was in the depth of hellish anguish and misery, I should not have asked the tenth part of it: the lord hath therefore given more, then we could have asked or thought: yet these are not all the privileges, which God hath bestowed upon his beloved ones, as shall be seen. For hereby they walk in greater safety, then if they were guarded with an army of men: yea, if whole armies of enemies came against them, as against Elisha, yet have they more with them, then against them. For the angels of God do pitch their tents about them to keep them.

And how great a prerogative this is, they can best tell who believe it, although they must needs commend it who do but hear the report of it. For they know and have experience of it, who receive these promises into their hearts by faith, and believe that God will perform the same unto them, who are not at any time deprived of them but only through their unbelief.

I grant, that all Gods children enjoy not this, neither say I any such thing: but this I say and affirm freely, that to every age in Christ, both the weak, the strong and the middle age, there is more granted by God, then is enjoyed of them: not that God doth in words seem to offer that, which he meaneth not to perform, but because men either know not, or believe not through Satan's malice, what their liberties are: or if they do, yet it is so faintly believed, that they are holden back by every occasion almost, to forgo and be dispossessed of them. Which all must grant to be through their own fault, which may easily appear to him who is willing to see it, thus: whereas the spiritual riches, which beautify the soul, are the greatest riches, and therefore should most be sought after, esteemed and delighted in: many even of good hope, which will grant this with us, will not yet bestow anymore travel for the same (be they never so great privileges which god offereth them) then they did in times past; that is, with less delight and fervency, then they show in following and looking after their earthly commodities. They cannot (I say) be brought to set a higher price upon the graces of God, and the heavenly liberties, which belong to Christians, then upon transitory things, which soon pass away.

And this in few words is the chief cause, why not only earthly minded men attain to nothing, but even some such as have received the first fruits of the spirit, grow not to any great experience what the excellent estate of a Christian is, and how great privileges God



granteth many of them to enjoy. Alas, if men taste but a little of belief that their sins shall be forgiven them, they hardly go any further to daily proceedings in their faith (though they are taught that they should grow from faith to faith) and so to live by it, but stand at a stay for the most part, ever ready to call into question, whether they have it or no. What are such the better for the infinite good things, which God hath in store for his, which also diverse of their brethren enjoy already, in respect of that which they may attain to? But rather as though they were no such, they walk either heavily, nothing able to bear off the discouragements which they meet with, by spiritual helps and encouragements which they have not; or rather in worse case, that is, not seeing, when they are hindered at all. I deny not, that the devil doth subtly and vigilantly seek to blindfold them, weaken their faith, and set manifold stops in their way: but wherefore have they been taught this, that the scripture giveth greater grace, but that the eye should believe it, and find it so then? And again the greater is he which is in them, namely the spirit of god, then he that is in the world, that is the devil?

And yet all these and other such excellent privileges which appertain unto them, are no more than God did see they should stand in need of to help them bear the burden of tribulation, reproach and other discouragements which here of necessity must meet with them: which would shake them so, as they would make them to faint utterly, if they were not upholden with props and stays most mighty. Consider this ye that forget God and ask not after him: but especially, ye servants of his who desire to do his will. For these things doth God indeed: I mean, he bequeatheth many goodly and sweet liberties to his, and many of his beloved ones find them and feel them; and you that do not so, behold what ye loose and go without. Claime therefore with reverence that which is your due, I mean which god hath bestowed upon you; and beware, lest through your default, the

privileges of Christians should not be thought as great as the Lord in his word affirmeth them to be, whiles you enjoy them not, as though they were no such.

The Lord hath done great things for us, as it is written: Honorable things are reported of thee, O thou city of God. And if it were not so, and if the love of God were not sweetly shed in our hearts through the holy ghost; yea, if we were not persuaded that the Lord is a plentiful rewarder of them that seek him, and that all the afflictions of this life are not worthy the glory which shall be showed upon us, we might soon be caused to cast down our countenance and be discouraged: who are not only strangers here and therefore not known nor regarded, but we are among professed enemies, who, the more we differ from them, the more we are hated of them, and therefore in fear of continual and infinite dangers by reason of them and their captain; and, but for that the Lord hath promised to be with us and guide us, we should utterly faint and be discouraged.

## **CHAP. 4.**

Of the third privilege: How God giveth grace to his children to live godly: and of the first branch.

But that it may better appear how great this privilege is, (and so I may proceed unto the rest) let us further hear, what worthy and singular fruits do flow from this fatherly ear and most loving providence of God over his, and accompany the same throughout their lives; which though they arise and proceed from the former, yet I will set them down as particular privileges distinctly by themselves. And because it is not so easily seen and conceived of many, much less believed, I will more particularly lay forth the same: and first this third; the sum whereof is this, that who so are thus cared for of God,

he bestoweth this grace upon them, that they learn of him that which none can learn elsewhere, nor any but his chosen ones can learn, that is how to live, and go through their whole pilgrimage according to his will; and how to die, and go from this vale of misery, that they may afterwards be taken up into glory: even this prerogative he granteth them. And it hath these two branches: the one, that they may be fruitful in good life; the other, that they may be kept from foul offenses.

Now concerning the first; namely, the holy life which God teacheth them to lead, this is not the least, I might rightly say there is no greater treasure here to be enjoyed: that they need not count the Christian life cumbersome, unsavory, and a heavy and tedious burden as the most do, but an easy yoke, an estate wherein they need neither be idle nor unprofitable, but readily prepared unto every good work. Now that they may be able to do this, to be settled constantly in a godly course, and wise to prevent and avoid the hindrances that lie in their way, and to aim at the commandments of God as at a mark, that they may keep them: is not this a benefit, yea a singular privilege, when the prophet calleth him an happy man that is enabled of God thereto? And Christ himself teacheth, that it is the chief happiness which can be enjoyed in this life, to keep the word of God which we hear, that it may direct and guide us? Yea, that one day in his house, that is spent and passed in the militant church and as his servants do, is better than a thousand in any estate besides?

And although it be an estate full of happiness, yet let no man marvel that I say God's beloved ones may have this liberty and prerogative to walk and live in it: for the Lord enableth them thereunto by whose power they can do all things; he giveth them an heart not defiled and unclean, as it was sometime, but purged and cleansed in good sort, and therefore now it is able to like and love his will which sometime

it loathed: and they who believe and are persuaded, that God will bestow and doth daily offer this grace of sanctification unto them, they receive it, and thereby are strengthened to do that good in their life, which they can love with their heart, and which they approve of and allow in their judgment.

Now if this liberty of God's servants be not either known of some good Christians, or not believed, I deny not but even they (as yet) may go without this privilege in great part, accordingly as we may see in many. But this need not be, if they knew and were persuaded of God's liberality and bounty towards them, as some others are, who is so far from denying grace hereto, that he hath pleasure to see them use it well to whom he granteth it. And until this be, that they draw by faith daily strength from Jesus Christ to subdue their lusts, they cannot obtain to find the Christian life easy to them, as some others do, but go to work by their own strength in all their duties, and by the virtue of their prayers hoping to prevail against their sins; which indeed are not conquered by any such means, but remain in their old strength still: the which they seeing, that for all their laboring and striving against them, yet they do not find that they are weakened or abated in them, but that although they toile themselves much, yet they profit little; they begin to be discouraged and faint, even in using the means which they did, beholding how they stick fast still in the mire wherein before they lay: and so they being discouraged, fall into some great sorrow, or which is little differing, break out into security and looseness. And this slavery they are brought unto, through the malice and subtlety of the devil, who seeing their unableness to believe the promise of God, (which is, that he will strengthen them against their special infirmities) doth play the Lion, holding them under with unbelief.

Against the which their remedy must be this, that they resist steadfast in faith: that is, that they yield not to this distrust, which long hath oppressed them, but by little and little suffer themselves to be persuaded that their case is far better than they conceive (which shall never be hard to persuade them: who found true deliverance from the spirit of bondage) and that the Lord hath not taken them into his favor to leave them at six and seven (as they say) in the world, and to make them shift for themselves as orphans, and to trust to their own wisdom and strength to preserve them from Satan and sin: but that he as a father caring for them, hath sufficient power in his hand to strengthen them, and requireth this of them, that they should believe it: which they cannot do but thereby they are mightily stayed and upholden, and by the same faith shall more and more be upholden daily; until they see themselves set at great liberty, and that it was the devil who before held them in fear and bondage.

The common objection will here be put forth unto me: that they would (if they durst be so bold) believe with all their hearts, that God will subdue and slay their sin and lead them forward to live godly, if they could first overcome some particular sins which do most trouble them: but as long as they prevail in them they dare not think (they say) that God will give them that grace, which he doth unto others. But to answer them, I have said before, that they have no power in them of their own whereby they may weaken any sin in them, but this they must obtain by faith, as well as grace to live: and that commands them to do, so that they may know, it pleaseth them that they should do so. And till that: they are holden from their own right through the devils craft, who hideth from them (as their evidence) this confidence in God; even as, if a subtle man should keep back from his neighbor, any part of his land or living. I conclude therefore, that God's children (who pardoneth their infirmities through Christ, and will not look straitly upon them) have this prerogative, that they

may lead their lives acceptable to him: and if they be careful to know, what liberty he hath given them whereby they may obtain ableness thereto, they may walk worthy the Gospel endeavoring to please him in all things, and so to be unrebukable in the midst of a wicked and froward generation; although (as I have said) through the devils tyranny and the unbelief of their own hearts, many even of them, are far from enjoining this privilege.

The which, as it is accompanied with happiness itself, so that it may be seen to be a privilege indeed peculiar to them, know we, that as for other it shall not neither can be so with them; they have no part in this treasure, no not even they, which at sometimes will seem more holy than the rest. The wicked (I say) have no fitness nor aptness to receive this grace [To live godly] no more than a dead man is fit to rise again and walk, or the black Moore by washing to change his black skin. And therefore although they like well enough of the name of it, yet that they are such as deny the power of it, hereby it may appear, that as the worst sort of them like dogs and swine tread it under feet and scoff at it; the common sort count it and term it preciseness, and love to be conversant with those that are of their own minds: so the best sort of them are such as find in themselves and know, that they have no pleasure in it. No better is the patched life of the best sort of papists, who live not by faith, but please themselves in this, that their works are good if they do the outward works which God and their church commend. All of them remain and continue in the damnable estate they were in at the beginning.

Neither do I marvel at this, which the Scripture affirmeth so plainly, that the ungodly are not obedient to the will of God, neither possibly can be. For I myself (saith Paul) when I was in darkness and lived after the lusts of mine ignorance, was greedily set to commit sin. Therefore if it be impossible for a man unrenewed to forsake some

particular sin, but by infinite degrees much more impossible to cleanse his heart, from whence only good life can come; it is most certain and clear, that all wicked men, while they abide so, are far off from this privilege, To be able to lead a godly life: and therefore that is peculiar only to God's children to do so.

## **CHAP. 5.**

Of a second branch of the third privilege.

Another branch of this privilege or honor, that Christians have above other men, (which though it necessarily accompany the former, yet because it best appeareth, when it is particularly laid open, and helpeth much to strengthen the weak, and to comfort the best) is this: that they may be kept and preserved from great and reproachful evils, that seldom or not at all (if it be expedient) they shall be overcome of them: which the Apostle would never so often and earnestly have exhorted the godly unto, saying: See that ye walk unblameable and without rebuke; and in another place: Walk not offensively towards them that are without; except he had seen, how they might have attained thereunto. Therefore the prophet saith: I have hid thy word in my heart that I might not sin against thee; and again: Let me not wander from thy commandments; and again: I swerved not from thy precepts: they are the joy of my heart. And the same spirit guiding God's people, they are like minded to him; and would not wander nor swerve from his will. And the cause of this must be considered, which is this: they count precious of Gods word, and therefore lay it up in their heart; and are persuaded, that it is the greatest gain to follow the doctrine of it: and therefore they count it not tedious to abstain from the sins which other cannot be

drawn from; but willingly forsake them, which other men with tooth and nail hold fast, and continue in.

Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Joshua after Moses death, Samuel, Daniel, Job, with others many in the former ages of the world, how do stories report of them? After they had any near acquaintance with God, they committed not any such heinous trespasses as were common stains and blots in the lives of others, (I speak not now of their virtues) but they departed and withdrew themselves from evil, even as God had chosen them out of the world; to verify that which is written: All these lived and died in faith? The Apostles after they had received more fullness and greater measure of the spirit, were far from the scandals and offenses, which before were usual, and daily rebuked in them, and committed of them. Yet to show what need the best have to be kept by God continually, sometime the devil prevailed, as to make breaches amongst them; though we seldom find any of them to have been thus deceived.

So, some of the churches have been commended to us to have been so far off from shameful falls (as the Thessalonians, the churches of Smirna and Pergamos) that they were good examples and lights to others. So, sundry persons in the New Testament, as Timothy, Demetrius, Priscilla and Aquila, who were well reported of. All which with others, as they are set forth for us to follow: so who doubteth, but that they found in their lives more sweetness and delight then others, who were also God's children as well as they, but not so free from manifest crimes and open sins as they? Now when they are thus kept from grievous and shameful falls, it followeth most necessarily, that even thereby they be kept also from sore and great punishments, as Psal. 91:11, forasmuch as these always follow them.



By this that hath been said, it may without any difficulty be gathered, what great liberties the true Christian hath given him of God. But seeing such as have not experience of that which I say, do hardly think it to be true, it shall be necessary for such to know another thing; and that is this: That God hath made such a way to the performing of all this that I have spoken of, that he showeth us, how this may be done with delight (which, we know, putteth away tediousness:) both the practicing of the Christian life which I spake of before, and the renouncing of the contrary sins which I now speak of. And this maketh both the branches of this privilege to be of exceeding value and excellency: that whereas godliness is so unsavory, yea wearisome to the most, yea even unto many such as will talk much of it, and preach it also; in the meanwhile, this should be enjoyed of any by the grace and goodness of God: That they may turn from their old sins; and contrarily, serve him with delight. And that the true Christian may rejoice in the doing of the will of God: our Savior Christ, who in all obedience to the commandments was willing to be an example to us, professing to his disciples that it was his meat and drink to do his fathers will, taught us also who are his members and one with him, that we should endeavor after the same, and may obtain to make it our meat and drink to do that which is pleasing to God. And although I am not ignorant, that we cannot have the fullness of rejoicing in doing good duties: yet if there were not much granted unto us in that behalf, (for all our strength of sin that remaineth in us) the Lord would not have said, that he hath made his yoke, that is, obedience to his word, easy for us, and his burden (as the flesh counteth it) to be gentle and light to us. Which Saint John interpreting showeth how; saying: All gain-saying power of the devil himself is resisted by faith; that is, while we believe, that God will give us strength and victory against the same.

Again, if we might not be able to find sweetness and pleasure in this walking with God, why would the Lord himself say in Deuteronomy: Rejoice before the Lord in all that thou shalt set thy hand unto, that is, go about throughout the day? And in another place: why would he reprove Israel for not serving him in joyfulness and gladness? Whereby God teacheth that this grace should be labored after in our particular callings: that the husbandman, artificer, magistrate, and preacher should and may walk in their vocation with cheerfulness; who yet, if they do their duties as it behooveth them, shall most hardly do it of all the rest: and the same I say of the poor man, and the servant and of all that walk in a lawful calling, seeing they serve in God's work. Which would not a little repair their lives and increase their comfort, over it is now with the most of them who go to their work as slaves, and as the horse and ox only for their belly's sake, and not serving God in doing their work to men. So that we knowing this, that we may be merry, and even find delight in the heavenly life, and in flying the corrupt behavior and bad example that is in the world (and that, with much more contentation and freedom from fear, then the carnal gospeller in all that his eye coveteth, or his soul longeth after) what would we desire more? Even as the psalmist saith, what greater pleasure would we wish, or better thing desire? All the pleasures of the earth are not to be compared with this wisdom, to be persuaded, that God's service is perfect freedom, and that it is sound pleasure to walk with him. And to say the truth, our life must needs be mopish and tedious, if it were not thus: and all that we do should go untowardly forward, as the froward servant which is sent against his will, goeth awkly about his business. But God making it delight and pleasure to us, we may set our hearts thereupon, not by fits, but mind it wholly for the most part, and principally above all other matters, which yet (when we knew no better) did wholly take us up and affect us: for where the treasure is, there is the heart; and look what a man delighteth in, that will oft

and every while come to remembrance and be thought upon: and by that means it is no more tedious and wearisome, as sometime it was, but the chiefest matter of all other that possesseth us. Therefore the prophet of God when he would in a certain place speak of the delight that he had in the statutes of God, he addeth this as a fruit thereof: That he had them continually in remembrance, and did not forget them.

And thus it cometh to pass, that many of God's servants may be seen to be drawn up unto God, and in their speech, behavior and whole course to bend this way more than other, to mind heavenly things, in such wise as other marvel thereat; the cause is this: They be resolutely persuaded, that their labor is not lost that way, yea rather that it is the pleasantest estate, and they find delight therein. And therefore they need not be as others, whose hearts are strongly carried after strange desires, but through God's guiding of them they may be set on things heavenly, seeing they have made them their delight and joy.

Oh weigh what an exceeding privilege this is, that both prayer and practice of duty whereto we were sometime not untoward only but even rebellious against it, should willingly be taken in hand now, and become pleasure instead of deadly toil? Yea, what a freedom and liberty is it, that we should make it our trade to aim at the serving of God in all things, so far as our knowledge serveth us? And as the godly way is become easy to them and daily regarded of them, after that it once waxeth pleasant to them: even so their old delights, I mean the lusts of their ignorance, grow loathsome, which they once thought impossible. And yet concerning rebellion and contradiction, they are not void of them for all their liberty and enlargement; but are holden captives thereof in great part against their will, as shall be said afterwards (for else they should have their heaven here, which

may not be:) but as they espy it, they give it no rest, but with hearty mislike, they oppose themselves and fight against it: and because they have sweetness and pleasure in in the Christian life, therefore the gainsaying lusts, which rebel against that course, and strive to hold them from it, are neither so forceable as they have been; neither do so long time, as they were wont, hold them under.

But this which I have said of the remainder of sin and of rebellion of nature abiding still in the best of God's servants, I would have well to be marked, for that many will be ready to take occasion otherwise to cavil and quarrel against that which I have said, namely, that God hath given this privilege and liberty to serve him with delight. For thus they reason: If you can go forward thus easily in a Christian life that you can take pleasure in it, which to so many Godly people is toile, it seemeth that you are not hindered, nor clogged with the rebellion of the old man, which is our corrupt nature, but that his force and strength is extinguished and killed: whereas the scriptures tell us far otherwise; and the best men that ever were borne after the manner of men, felt it, smarted by it, and complained of it. Therefore (say they) you set before us such a Christian as is nowhere to be found.

But to all this I answer somewhat more fully than I did before: that if it were not for the stirring and rebellion of the old man, and the corruption and naughtiness that cleaveth fast unto us, we should by many degrees far exceed the greatest measure of holiness, which we can now possibly reach unto; although we deny not, but that through the grace of God we have attained to somewhat already. For as we serve God with delight now, and may (God be glorified) do so for the most part: so we should (but for the sin that sticketh fast in us) do so, perfectly and continually without intermission and contradiction, as the heavenly spirits do. And as our Savior Christ, seeing he could

never be convicted of any sin when he was here upon earth (as his words prove, Which of you can accuse me of sin?) therefore when the Prince of this world (namely, the Devil) came, he found nothing in him which he looked for, namely, sin: even so should it likewise be with us but for this fountain of spiritual leprosy, whereas now we find through the uncleanness of our hearts, that there is imperfection and weakness even in our best actions, that I say nothing of those which are common.

And although with delight we go forward in duty both to God and men; yet through weak knowledge, faith, memory, &c. through subjection to sin and Satan, even the best estate that we can attain to, is with much infirmity, and with just cause of crying out as the Apostle by his example taught the perfectest in this world to do, saying: O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? So that the old man is not killed, nor his strength extinguished: we say no such thing, but abated indeed and weakened much, as well as pardoned, through the grace and power which we receive daily from our Lord Jesus Christ by faith. And this for answer unto the former objection: whereby it may clearly be seen, what I mean, when I say, that God hath given power to us, if we acknowledge and believe it, to lead a Christian life with delighting in it: which though it be not without change, full and absolute; yet, in that it is so great liberty as it is, it ceaseth not to be worthily accounted a most great privilege, as I have said before. For is it a small thing to find pleasure and the greatest rejoicing, in the subduing of our evil hearts, and in the forgoing of our unlawful liberties, which other men fight for with tooth and nail, and would count their life worse than any death except they might enjoy them?

Nay, is it not an high degree of honor, that we may from day today be admitted to rejoice before the Lord in the duties which we do, even

all that we shall set our hand unto: when yet others are so far off from it, that they would choose to lie in prison all the days of their life, rather than they would be thus yoked, as they account of it? O therefore, praise the Lord, all ye servants; the Lord I say, who doth so wonderful things for his: for in this is that Scripture fulfilled, which saith: Honorable things are reported of thee, that is, which thy God hath done for thee, O thou city, or people, of God. And if it were not so, that the Lord hath done so great good things for his people, how could that be true which is said in another place, of their happy estate; that it is better to be a door-keeper in God's house, because we are there in his service and under his government, than to dwell in the tents of the ungodly wheresoever, yea though it were in the palace of Princes?

If it be further demanded: Where are such as enjoy this prerogative in their lives? I say, I know no cause, why God's people, which have an acquittance and discharge against the day of judgment and the wrath to come, and have sound knowledge and assurance of their salvation, and of God's fatherly care over them while they live here; I say, I know no cause why all they should not have some good and lively resemblance of such persons. For did they hold fast this persuasion, that God hath given this liberty unto them, the Devil (who it is, which injuriously detaineth it from them) should deceive and defeat them no longer in the gross sort and manner that he doth. But this I must add (because it is a common bait whereby they are snared:) earthly pleasures and profits (yea, though lawful) must be in meaner reckoning with them. They are too eager and greedy in their dealings, and their hearts especially must be pruned of much dross and rubbish: as, unwillingness, untowardness in the using of those helps by the which men may wait upon God with ease from time to time.

Also men must think it the greatest liberty, to have their hearts readily framed and disposed to their several duties; and be persuaded, that nothing is better for them then thus to bridle the unruly affections, which are every while ready to break off the best course that can be entered into of them. And if we think it much to be enjoined thus to curb up the old man which most hindereth from going forward with delight and readiness, consider what injury we offer to the Almighty, that whereas nothing goeth forward well that is unwillingly gone about: so neither should this work of the Lord do in us, except we should provide so, that much untowardness and awkeness in God's service (which is wont either to break it off, or to be the greatest hindrance therein) be removed or at least resisted. Which shall not be hard to do, if we daily consider, that he hath promised to make us fit for that which he sets us about; and that we believing his said promise, shall find the truth of it in us, our hearts encouraged, our backwardness and sloth repelled or much abated, as Joshua and other his faithful servants have done: which grace if it may be obtained of us (and who doth not see clearly that it may?) I mean, that all true Christians may obtain willingness and cheerfulness in their daily duties doing, and to be much freed from the contrary untowardness and unfitness, which is the greatest let that can stand in their way: if (I say) God have provided so mercifully for his, that they may with delight walk in his ways, set themselves to watch against their infirmities, and so in their common dealings and actions practice a godly and innocent life, and that they may do earthly business with heavenly minds, (which the unreformed cannot in the least manner attain unto) I conclude this privilege as the former, that the Lord hath in giving this gift unto his children, bestowed an invaluable blessing and prerogative upon them: and let us wait for and enjoy it; and when we fail most, acknowledge such weakness, that we may find release of it from God: and if any of his find it not, neither see it to be so, it is their unbelief which depriveth

them of such a treasure; but when they enter into God's sanctuary, they shall see it far otherwise.

This were worthy to be harkened after (some perhaps will say) if we might indeed attain hereto. But what triumph call ye this over Satan and sin, when the best of us are privy to this, that we are carried by them both, to do that which we know to be displeasing unto God? For besides this that some particular sins do draw us through the deceitful enticements thereof, (the devil changing himself into an angel of light to wind us in the more subtly) there are also strong corruptions which break out in us, prevailing dangerously to the hindering of us from many good duties, and that often times: as in the examples of Job, David and Peter it may appear. These two objections (of great weight doubtless) I must first answer, before I go further. And first of the foremost: though they, I mean the Godly, be not void of the sins which I have spoken of, yet that hindereth not the honor, which God hath set them in and given unto them. For there is left in the most holy a strife betwixt the spirit and the flesh, and that for this purpose, by the lord himself even in his elect, (as the Apostle teacheth by his own example) not that they should perish; but partly, lest they should look to triumph before the victory (which Satan would most of all wish;) partly, that the best men being privy to their own weakness (and that throughout their life) might not rest upon their own strength, but always depend upon God: yea and further also, for this cause he doth it, that the more hard the combat is and their strife with Satan and sin the more vehement, the more glorious might the victory appear. And therefore as it is in war and battles fought amongst men, we do not measure the victory by anything done one either side whiles they are contending or skirmishing, for the vehemency of the one or the remissness of the other; neither will we count him a coward, who shall be grievously wounded, no although he sometime give back like one which is overcome, so as he



do afterwards take heart and courage to himself again: even so in this spiritual fight and conflict, when we shall see the good Christian to be over-matched, as it were, and for the time driven to hard distress by sustaining the shame and reproach of some evil action committed, or rank rebellion nourished, which is no less than if a man should in war loose some member of his body; yet must we not think that the spirit hath yielded itself unto the flesh, neither hath been overcome of it, though sore and grievously wounded, if it shall by the feeling of the smart which it took by the sin committed, gather again greater heart of detestation against it, and strength and courage by spiritual armor to repel Satan's poisoned darts for hereafter.

Now of the examples: and first of Job, ye will say: How could he cry out as he doeth in the third chapter against the day of his birth; cry out I say, yea howl, and charge God, but he must needs show himself to be overcome of the flesh? There is no doubt (I grant) but that his adversary the devil did now make full reckoning, that he should fall into very loathsome blasphemy, and utter desperation: and it cannot be denied, but that he was carried very far out of the way. But yet, as he is not to be freed from all fault; so he is not to be further charged then he gave just cause, forasmuch as the Lord himself doeth so determine the controversy in the end (whose sentence no man doubteth, but that it was most righteous:) that although he reprove him, yet of his singular goodness he doth not make his fault so heinous, but chargeth his three friends as the chief provokers of him to that evil which he did, and crowneth him as it were, for that in so great a combat by his valiant wrestling he had prevailed: yet for our further edification, let us see somewhat more particularly into this action, directing ourselves by that which the Lord hath said of him. I say therefore, that Job sinned many ways, but yet through human frailty. For his intemperate speech proceeded not from a settled and constant purpose of the mind, but was wrung from the exceeding

greatness of his grief and pain, which hindered for the time all sense and light of faith and judgment in him. For in that he thought, he could by no other means be delivered from those so great evils which he suffered, but by death; it showed that he did not thoroughly nor sufficiently weigh the power and might of God. In that he wished either that he had never been borne, or together with his birth to have died, it must needs be granted, that it was a speech of a man little considering what he said; but which had forgotten what great mercies he had received, yea what he himself had sometime uttered (i.e. If we have received prosperity from the Lord, why should we not suffer adversity?) in that he earnestly wished deliverance from his sufferings, but asked it not of God, it bewrayed a mind in him sore troubled. And lastly, in that he had regard only to his own quiet and ease, and thought at that time, death to be the finisher of his sorrows; it might have seemed to give him place among the Epicures (who take their pleasure whiles they live, looking for nothing after death) but that he declared himself at other times, to be of a contrary mind. But all these (as I have said) proceeded from man's frailty, as we may afterwards hear Job himself to confess. For who doth not marvel, in that so great trouble and anguish of his, that he uttered not one word either against his wife, or against his friends dealing so unwisely with him, and so sore provoking him, as furious and raging men are wont to do in such a case? So that we should not so much marvel, that he could be moved to any impatience at all, being stricken down with so many and weighty blows of sorrow; as that he could keep any measure therein, that he neither brake out into rage against them which so vexed him, nor into blasphemy against God (which Satan labored most especially to have brought him unto.) Neither is he to be counted an impatient man, who doth not by and by resist and overcome all vexations of body and torments of mind, with such strength and constancy as were to be wished; but he, who so goeth to work, that the hellish spirit in the end prevaleth over him

and hath the upper hand. Therefore, most wisely and fitly to this purpose, doth the apostle James admonish: that in judging about Job's conflict, we consider not so much, what came to pass in the combat and fight, as we mark the end of the battle, that is to say, that God did inwardly uphold his servant, and pronounced him an happy man: and though he suffered him to be very grievously tempted, yet never beyond his strength, which he in most fit time and season did support him with. And what one among all the Saints of God hath not proved and found this true, if we mark and consider their words and their lives? Let thus much be granted therefore, that the flesh raged in Job, and so, that he offended grievously; and no marvel, for he was a man: but yet (God himself being judge of this matter) he never wholly gave place to the flesh: but (although it was not without many wounds received in the battle) yet the spirit prevailed, and had the upper hand in him.

Of Peter likewise this is to be said: As the Lord Jesus had done much for him, and given him many privileges, even as to other of the Apostles he had done; yet in that dangerous plunge of his, being the greatest downfall (a man would think) that ever any good man might sustain, he neither sinned against the Holy Ghost, neither was wholly drawn from his hold, and subdued by Satan. For although he denied in word, that he knew Christ, yea and that with a curse called for upon himself, if he knew him; I say more, though his conscience did burn within him at the same time, yet did not his mind go with his mouth, neither did he change his judgment with his speech: but he was brought unto it, partly by that rashness of his, which was too ready at hand with him in many of his actions; and partly, by the fear of that danger which was at hand, if he had confessed Christ. But in the mean season, that spirit which had taught him that Christ was the son of the living God; and so taught it him, that he loved nothing more dearly than his master: that spirit (I say) dwelling still in him,

was not carried to such outrage, but either was silent in him not consulted withal (as in heady and boisterous affections it cometh to pass;) or else, it secretly rebuked the tongue, though no such thing appeared. And so likewise the faith, for which Christ prayed that it might not fail nor be overcome, was not extinct in him, nor utterly lost. For if it had been so, he would have joined himself in familiarity with the Jews, and have complained, that he had all that while been deceived of his master: whereas on the other side, he went forth and wept bitterly, and declared many ways how deeply he was displeased with himself for that his offense. Neither yet do I speak this of Peter, as though I went about to make his sin small and light; which (surely) I am persuaded, did deserve eternal death a thousand ways: but that if any have sinned of infirmity or in any such manner, as Peter did, (and yet, besides the unpardonable sin, one would think that none could be greater) yet that they should not cast away all hope, and so despair; but that they should be persuaded, that the way is open to salvation, if they have the faith and repentance which Peter had.

Of David and others, the like may be said; but I have stayed too long in these examples. I will return now to the privileges and liberties which the servants of God have proper unto themselves from other men, that they may not coldly and unwillingly despise the world, and cleave to the Lord without fainting. I trust, now the hardest objection is answered which can be brought against their welfare and prosperity, and that it cannot be taken from them by any subtlety or malice of the adversary; as it is written: The gates of hell shall not prevail against them: and therefore I may be bold to affirm, that they having their names written in heaven already, and this being testified of them by the Lord himself, That they shall be kept safe unto the resurrection day, and that none shall take them out of his hands; that they are in great account with him, and highly esteemed of him, as

was said before. And howsoever the world think and speak of them, because they know them not: yet is their estate most honorable, because they are honored of the Almighty, and from the greatest fear of danger they are delivered. Is a valiant and noble gentleman in disgrace, because (whiles he goeth under great perils for his country, and hazardeth his life for his Prince, and goeth thorough many hard adventures) he is reported of to be confederate with the enemy: when yet he is beloved and renowned (and that for just cause) of Prince and Peers? No more is the servant of God to be reputed vile, and his estate contemptible, for that (whiles he goeth about to honor his God, and in his life to express his exceeding kindness) he is both then and therefore set against by the devil and his ministers, and by their malice and subtlety drawn into some action, which might cause ill report and breed a doubt of his godliness, when yet his faithfulness is approved of the Lord his God. Was Paul, because he was buffeted by the messenger of Satan, that is, after great exaltation and glory a little before, now immediately not only deprived of the feeling of it, but brought to so contrary an estate, that he was deeply ashamed to think he had been so high; was he therefore deprived of that which yet he was made to hope for? Nay, therefore the Scripture putteth it out of all doubt, saying after: That he triumphed over Satan in token that he had found nothing in him to overthrow him, as he saith himself: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: from henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. Therefore we see, how God keepeth his from shameful evils, while they believe that he will do so, and maketh an holy and Christian life their comfort. And yet all these and other such excellent privileges which appertain unto them, are no more than God did see they should stand in need of (as I said in the former privilege) to help them bear the burden of tribulation, reproach and other discouragements which here meet with them: which would

shake them so, as they would make them to faint utterly if they were not upholden with props and stays most mighty.

## CHAP. 6.

Of the fourth privilege: How the godly may rise again when they are fallen.

The fourth privilege doth most fitly go and agree with these three former, although much differing from them: and therefore I do adjoin it, as the next in order thereto. And it is this: that if at any time his beloved ones do by any occasion fall from their settled course into any offense, whereby their consciences are wounded and accuse them, or be by strong delusion persuaded that God is highly displeased with them; yet this liberty they have given them of God, to return to him, with certain persuasion that he will never cast them off, but will receive them into favor again, from which it seemed to them that they were debarred: whereas they, who were never converted unto God, can have no such warrant, neither desire it unless it be in their fear. And yet I speak not this, as though I went about to debar such from embracing God's mercy offered them: who I exhort earnestly, to seek it speedily. But as for the other, there is no just cause why they should cast away their confidence, and doubt or fear that the Lord hath forsaken them, as the most of them through ignorance and unbelief do too readily conceive and persuade themselves. For if any of them sin, they have an Advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is a propitiation for their sins, to the end they may be encouraged to rise up out of their falls again.

And if it were not thus, that they might be received again after some grievous offense, what encouragement were there to any Christian, to strive against sin and seek to live godly, seeing one time or other, the

frowardest may be led into that sin which he never thought he should have been deceived by? So that God would have us know, not only that we may rise up from our falls, and return to him again as to our father; but also, he commandeth us so to do, and looketh for it at our hands, and is offended if we do it not; as may plainly appear by his own words in the prophet Jeremiah: Do men fall and not rise again? Or go out of the way and not return? I waited and looked, and there was no man that said: What have I done? If God wait and look for it, that such as have perversely offended, should return; and taketh it ill at their hands that they do not: is it to be doubted, whether they may or no? Yet more may be said to this purpose. Me thinks that which our savior Christ speaketh to Peter, is admirable: who was not content to teach him this doctrine among other, Of the return of a straying sheep; but because he would strongly arm him against despair, at the time when he should fall into that deep gulf of denying him, he saith unto him,; Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired you to sift you as it were wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou shalt be converted, strengthen thy brethren. Wherein most lovingly and wisely, although covertly, he forewarneth him, that though Satan should drive him far from his standing, and almost glean him out from the rest of his fellows, as an Apostate: yet for all that, he should not remain separate from him, and through unbelief afraid to come home to him again, but in any wise think that he must return: and for more sure token thereof, he should afterward convert others; seeing by his experience he should be best able to persuade them, as having most deeply fallen himself and therefore might hardliest of others have been raised up again and pardoned. And to a singular end did the Lord Jesus speak thus to him, and in fit season, lest Peter after his fall should have been afraid to arise: for which cause also, he did encourage him; when sending to his disciples to meet him in Galilee, he expressly named Peter among the rest, saying: Go tell the disciples and Peter that I go before them into

Galilee, lest Peter should else have thought that he had not been worthy to be counted a disciple. Mar. 16:7.

And if it were not so, that all weak ones falling by any occasion, might be raised up again, and the poor wandering souls brought home, but must utterly perish and be lost, to what end should these and many other like Scriptures serve: Brethren, if any be fallen by infirmity, thou that art spiritual, that is, hast more strength of the spirit than they, help to hold them up in the spirit of meekness; that so they may be fast settled in their former faith and hope again? And also, the parable of the straying sheep upon the mountains, which with all diligence was sought up again till it were found, and not let go and lost forever? Besides, who knoweth not, that it is one use of the ministry of the word, as we read in the prophet Ezekiel, to strengthen, confirm and stablish those, who having had a taste of the life to come, yet are hailed and carried from their stayed course by the deceitfulness of sin and the world? Also, to heal the sick and to bind up the broken, &c? For the which cause, the Apostle desired to come to the Thessalonians often, to supply that which might be wanting in any of them: and if a man must oft and in great injuries remit his brother, will not God who teacheth others to be merciful, do much more? Therefore this ought to be out of all question, and controversy, that the brother who hath forsaken the good way which leadeth to life, and is entangled in the world, or snared in the false and deceivable pleasures of it, or any other way is turned aside after Satan; yet is not cast off from being cared for of the Lord, but hath large liberty and great encouragement to return, contrary to that cursed opinion of the Novatian heretics.

Which if it be so, who doeth not see, what and how great a benefit and privilege it is to all that have fallen into any grievous crime, (at least as they count it) and so have their faith weakened, and their



comfort appalled? For to a man in that case nothing is more comfortable, as by the words of Elihu in the book of Job, most lively appeareth, saying: When a man shall be so wrought upon by the word of God, that for fear and inward anguish he turn away from his own work, that is, his old sinful life, and refuse his meat which was wont to be most pleasant unto him, and sorrow take hold on him upon his bed, &c: if then there be a messenger of God, one that can tell him God's mind, (who shall be as one of a thousand unto him) who can certify him of the favor of God that he shall not be forsaken of him; behold that man is revived, and he is comforted as in the days of his youth, &c. And every godly preacher hath experience of the same: both how many heavy-hearted Christians are raised out of their falls with much comfort; and how intolerable an estate it were for them to bear, if they had not good assurance from God about that matter.

But this which I say is wisely and warily to be heard and received, I confess: that is to say, that even as it is with all thankfulness to be hearkened unto of the afflicted in mind, and such as mourn in Zion: so likewise, that in no wise it be used as an occasion to embolden any to sin, or to gather hardness of heart in them, that either they dare go forward more readily to that sin which they delight in, because they hear there is hope of forgiveness to such as have run from God; or seek pardon the more slightly and hoverly, because God receiveth such sinners to mercy.

Both which respects because they are worthy to be regarded always in this case, and for that an example very fit for this purpose cometh to my remembrance, I will in as few words as I can, lay forth the same. In the book of Ezra the priest, we read, that he and many of the people of the captivity after their return home, cast themselves down before the house of the Lord, praying and confessing their sins

with tears in abundance, and chiefly this sin, in that they had taken to themselves wives of strangers; which was a grievous breach of the Lord's commandment. Zechania the son of Jehiel a godly man, answered and said unto Ezra: It is true; we have committed a most heinous and willful offense, in joining ourselves to strangers, and marrying wives out of them: but yet, that we cast not ourselves into deadly despair, (as such a transgression of God's law might easily carry us unto) let us know, that there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Wherein, these two points I observe principally among many others: that as neither Ezra who had great knowledge in the law of God, nor Zechania, nor the people which feared God, durst in such an offense lightly and in a loose manner, heal up their breach of God's commandment, although they knew that there was hope to be conceived of pardon; but saw cause to humble themselves before God in the confession of their sin, and prayed for the remission of it with tears, and made a firm covenant to put away their strange wives: so yet, when they sought unto God after this holy and hearty manner, then did they encourage one another to look for mercy and forgiveness, saying: There is hope?

And so it ought to be with all Gods children: that when they have been supplanted by the devil (for all their care and watchfulness,) then ought they to embrace this sweet remedy, and fly unto it as to an anchor; That God will be entreated of them: and so with more thankfulness and humbleness to walk forward. If any therefore abuse this liberty to licentiousness and boldness in sinning, they shall bear their punishment; and let them be sure, that their sin will find them out. Thus we having seen clearly and plainly the mind and will of God about this matter, let us now consider the greatness of this liberty and benefit: that the poor servants of God who have been much distressed for want of the certain knowledge of it, may be helped and relieved.

I remember the days and times (as I still see oft the experience of it) wherein this glad tidings would of heavy and afflicted consciences have been esteemed above gold, if it could have been fitly applied to their disease, and if they standing in need of it, might have been assured from God of such welfare: I remember (I say) such times, and the desire of many therein; who yet for want of that, have lie languishing, and been filled with heaviness for that they could not be raised up and comforted: some, whole weeks and months: some others for not receiving this message in due time, have been cast for many years into such distrust of God's favor, that it hath been a matter of great difficulty to recover them at the length. And who doubteth, but that it was the estate of the people of Israel, and of many generations of them? And namely at Bochim, when they repented by the message of the angel? And also another generation after them, whom Samuel, after long straying from God, brought home? And of some of the Churches in the Revelation; as namely, the church of Ephesus ? That they stood in need of this encouragement, who having left their old first love, although good things were still found in them, were told by the Apostle John from the Lord, that they were so far gone, that it was time for them to consider with themselves from whence they were fallen, and to renounce their sins, and repent of them, and do their former works; that so they might again receive sound comfort? Whose sore, when it should have come to be felt, would have turned to another manner of vexation, both longer continuing and more deeply pinching them, if by this counsel from God it had not been prevented.

And such as in this age are subject to the same weakness, as having sometime laid hold on God's favor and mercy, yet have afterward fallen into some sin against their conscience, must hold this for a singular privilege: that the Lord is willing to receive them again, to

pass by their sin, and that they by the way that he hath taught them should rise up to comfort.

This doctrine where it is received, honoreth God highly, and causeth many thanks to be given to him, for that poor sinners see him so ready to forgive them, and that, so often and so many and great offenses as they themselves durst not look for, or think that he would: and in that many who bare show that they are troubled for their sins sometime, do not magnify God for this truth and doctrine with all their might, it is because they are not they whom they would be taken to be, that is, sound-hearted. But then could it not be a privilege properly belonging to the children of God, if hard-hearted or double-minded persons might be partakers of it. But they laboring to shake off godly sorrow for their sin, and check of conscience, all that they can, and as long as they are able, by mirth and pastime or in continuance of time to forget it; if for all their shifting and fencing it off, the Lord sometime strike them with terror, and hold them under by strong hand, and cause them to quake: yet they do not seek his face, but either bow themselves only for a day like a bulrush, as Ahab; or else they are swallowed up into utter despair, as Judas. Neither can such have any release at all. So much the greater favor let others (I mean, God's servants) count it, that they may in their repentance for their sin, hope steadfastly for pardon; yea, and ought to say everyone unto their souls: Turn unto thy rest, O my soul: for the Lord hath heard thy groans, and rejecteth not thy prayers. Why art thou cast down and disquieted within me? Wait on God, he is my present help: for he is more ready to grant, than we to ask. For if the son of God make them free, then are they free indeed. An exceeding privilege is this to them: and therefore who seeth not, that they resting thus persuaded, may be of good comfort?

For indeed, this privilege is given of God as a remedy; and therefore may and ought of all that have need of it, to be received, and by all means to be embraced; which if it be, forthwith the wound and sore is healed, which yet without such a medicine and help had been desperate and incurable: a remedy far unlike to popish contrition, confession auricular to a priest, and their blasphemous satisfaction. Oh therefore, that this might enter deeply and were thoroughly settled in the hearts of such, as mourn and pine away for that they have provoked God to anger. Oh that they knew, that their tears are put into the bottle of gods remembrance, and how ready he is to receive them into favor, and to blot out all their offenses; who hath therefore said: See that ye despise not one of these little ones: and again, Rejoice and be glad, ye that mourn in Zion, &c. for I will dwell in the midst of you: and to his prophets and ministers; Comfort my people, comfort them at the heart.

And further I say: Oh that such had been rightly grounded in faith at the first; which hath been as much, or rather more, the fault of the unskillful builder and teacher of them, then their own. For this may most truly be affirmed, that for want of well grounding them, they have upon every light and small occasion been shaken and unsettled in their faith; as, in the least accusation of their conscience, in any affliction, or in the fear of death. But if they could see the bountifulness of Gods love towards them, how unworthy soever they seem in their own eyes, they should not go so long heavy and disquieted, suffering the enemy to oppress them, and as though there were no hope for them in their God. But yet I say this on the other side: Oh that some did not look too hastily to be received into favor, and use means too slightly for the same; yea, I say again: Oh that some did not too profanely, or blockishly and ceremoniously seek to God, and return to him in hollowness of heart: which manner of abasing themselves, doeth hold them in a worse case then the other.

And thus (to draw to an end of this matter) I trust it doth appear what a singular privilege this is, that the Lord granteth free access to those, who after their conversion have sinned any way against their conscience, to bewail their sin before him, and to be persuaded of forgiveness of the same: which being known of them, they need not hold back from him, as many of his dear children for a long time have done; but come home again, and that early, seeing God who hath smitten them, will heal them; and he, who hath called himself a God of great compassion and mercy, would have his poor people to feel and enjoy it. The same I say likewise of dullness, idleness, unprofitable barrenness of the heart, and such other corruptions which are wont to quench the work of gods spirit in his children, and to be the seed of many cursed evils: the Lord's will is, that they should believe that he will give them strength to weaken them, as well as forgive them; and that they should thereby be encouraged to shake them off, and break out of them: which if they were persuaded that they might do, would encourage them more heartily to resist and stop them.

## **CHAP. 7.**

Of the fifth privilege: namely, The gracious helps by which he hath granted them to grow in faith and godliness.

All this that hath been said of these four privileges last mentioned, will be granted in general to be true I doubt not, for all professors are literal and speculative Christians: they say, and do not. But when this doctrine should be brought to use of them in particulars, and when they are to be pressed with the practice of it, then many will answer: They hope that it doeth not appertain to them, neither are they able (they say) thus to hold steadfastly the certainty of gods favor by faith,

and to subdue and overcome their sins, to lead a godly life, nor to rise up again when they have fallen dangerously: (thereby showing, that they do not look to be led by the word in their actions:) but I go not about to persuade such, that they have any part in these privileges. And they might speak with good reason, objecting thus of all other as well as of themselves, if God had not appointed and taught them by what helps and means, they may do this. But therefore we are to know that God hath bestowed this privilege upon his children, over and beside the former, that by such means and helps as he hath acquainted them with, and taught them to use, they may be able to enjoy the foresaid liberties (which without them, and by their own strength they cannot so much as go about) and to prevail so far by enjoining them, that they may find their lives more sweet and comfortable, then other can in what estate or condition soever, if they have not their part in them.

And that it may be seen that these helps are privileges, (as I have said) behold it briefly in the particular helps, and especially such are to be used daily; as for example: What a benefit is it, that by prayer we may come unto our God for whatsoever we have need of that is good for us, and may obtain it? That we may come to him, (I say) break our mind, lay open our grief and commune familiarly with him as with a friend, when we will: he never being weary of us, nor taking scorn of us or rejecting us? When yet, to have this access to an earthly prince but at some time and for someone pleasure or other, is few men's cases to obtain, and hardly enjoyed. But this is yet more, that we know how to come before the Lord with confidence and reverence, so as we need not doubt but he will hear and regard us, and so to come with delight; when yet prayer is counted a cold help to men of the world to be upholden by.

Of watchfulness to say a little also: what a treasure is this, that whereas the devil deceiveth thousands, they being not wise and wary to escape his sleights; yet he teacheth his, far greater wisdom and care to take heed to themselves? For he draweth some to whoredom and uncleanness: some to vain and dangerous expense of the precious time in play and folly: some to hunt after the wealth of this world, with pined and hunger starved souls: and undoeth others after sundry other ways; when yet we may by watchfulness shift and shun them, and not be taken in the snare, as others are; and the oftener that we have prevailed, we may be the better able to prevail still for hereafter: and that we thus resisting and overcoming in the greatest danger, we may much more avoid the smaller. But neither our gain by it, nor their loss who are not acquainted with it, is greatly considered of them till they have thoroughly smarted for the neglect of it.

And so I may say of the viewing of, and looking back unto our whole course of life in the day, when we are ready to lie down at night: What a sweet liberty is this, that whereas the most are either stung or wounded at night with the remembrance of their evil spending of the day or a great part of it, or some evil that they have done in it; or else, think not of it at all, but digest it merrily and forget it (which, of the two, is far more dangerous, as that which surfeiteth them:) yet we may by this privilege of looking back to our bestowing of the day, avoid both the one and the other of these daily sicknesses; or if we remember anything to have escaped us amiss, we are ready to bewail and acknowledge it to our God, and to pray for pardon in faith, and renounce our sin: and yet who seeth not, that for the most part, we may be sure to find little to accuse us then at our lying down, or to hinder our sleep, because we were watchful against it through the day, while we were awake? The same I may say of the rest.



For as he hath promised to bless the using of these helps, so he draweth our hearts to believe it that he will do so indeed, and thereby to look for the accomplishing of his promise even as certainly, as if it were already performed; as Joshua did in all the Lord's battles which he fought for the people of Israel, when God had said of the whole land of Canaan: I have, or (which is all one in God) I will give it into thy hand; he believing that he would do so indeed, was encouraged thereby to fight for it, and to go against their enemies and make war with them, in another manner of proceeding, either in cheerfulness or confidence, then they which came against him. And so (to say the same of the particulars) when the Lord said: I have given Jericho and Ai into thy hands, the king of Jerusalem with his band of other kings and their men of war, the king of Hazer with all the kings and people that came with him, whose multitude was as the sand of the sea shore; what was his munition or armor, but his faith? Wherein lay his strength but in this, that he believed, that the God of heaven and earth was stronger than all they; and that he which had promised, would also do the same although he was invisible? For the which cause, it is written in the scriptures, that by faith the walls of Jericho (a thing in reason most absurd) yet by faith, and not by battery or strength or policy, they fell down. The same I might (but for avoiding tediousness) say of many other; who believing, that God would bless the same means, which he commanded them to use, have with great courage enterprised them: as Noah in making the ark, Abraham in offering to kill his son; who if they had not believed, that God would bless their endeavors and turn them to their great good, would never have attempted the same.

And thus having made this matter plain by examples, I will now proceed in applying them to the present occasion. Therefore, as Joshua having promises given him of God, believed them and thereby prevailed against difficulties and discouragements: so God's

servants having the like promises, are strengthened by God to believe them, as he was, and by believing them obtain that which is promised. For God promiseth, that by the helps which he hath given, he will enable his people to get victory over their sins, to lead a godly life: and when they fall by any infirmity, not to suffer them either to faint and despair of forgiveness, on the one side; or to make light of their sin and to be careless about it, one the other side. These promises therefore whosoever believe, they by the helps which they use, obtain the blessing, namely the thing that is promised. So that it is not the bare using of these helps which effecteth, much less meriteth any such fruit or blessing; but that they are used in faith, and the parties who use them, look constantly for blessing upon the same, and power and strength from God to help their weakness.

This was necessary for me to say, how and in what case the means and helps, which we use to the constant practicing of a godly life, become effectual unto us; namely, when we believe God that he will bless them to us. And indeed otherwise, let not men look to receive anything thereby; which the apostle James affirming of one especial help, namely of prayer, is as truly said of all the rest: that he which doubteth and wavereth (when he should believe) whether by those helps he shall be furthered and bettered or not; let not that man look to receive anything. Therefore we must learn to be acquainted with faith, even as we desire to be acquainted with God (for by no other means can we know him, or have access unto him:) and thereby we receive power and strength through the helps which we use, to live well and godly. These helps what they are, and which ought to be used every day, and which by other occasions, I have before set down in the third and fourth part of this treatise.

Now, forasmuch as God hath given this liberty, as a singular privilege to his people, to use these helps constantly and continually, it is our

part to see, whether we do so or not; or whether we suffer ourselves to be plucked away with the error of the wicked, and so fall from our steadfastness. For if we find not our lives, and our whole course in all dealings and affairs through the day, to be so passed as that we have peace to Godward throughout, and with peace lie down at even, it is our own sin; God hath taught us, and also provided how it might have been otherwise with us, if we had been but as careful to find it, as we were careful about our living and maintenance, or to seek up a strayed beast which we had lost, and to bring it into the pasture again.

And to speak more plainly, if we do not so begin the day with thanksgiving, confession of sin, and prayer when we may do it conveniently, and so arm ourselves with the whole armor of a Christian, so watch and pray after, so use Christian exercise in family, and remember God's bounty towards us; and lastly so look back to our passing of the day, that we may see by all these that we have been guided by God, and that we have been holden in our course without any just cause to wound our conscience: then it is the devil, who hath detained and kept our right from us, and deprived us of so good a portion as our God hath bequeathed us, when he showed himself willing to have had it otherwise.

And whither through ignorance, we know not how to be safely led through the day; or that which is little better, although we know, yet for sloth, or for that we love darkness more than light, we let pass many known duties, or suffer sundry offenses to pass from us in the day: it is all one, as if we would suffer ourselves to be deprived of our own proper inheritance by some cousener, who shall tell us that it belongeth not unto us, when yet we are able to show clear and sufficient evidence for it. For when the Lord shall say: Let no man take away your crown; then the devil showeth himself manifestly in

detaining it from us. And therefore we must remember that to use these helps rightly, is no bondage nor servitude, as men of the world count them, who strain themselves and strive mightily to be delivered from the holy and spiritual use of them, and not to be tied thereto: we must rather be persuaded, that they are most precious liberties, peculiar to gods dearest servants; and a singular benefit of God, that in such a dead world, and frozen age as we live in, we may be counted meet, and made able to honor our God, (which to most men is tedious) and to have peace with him throughout the day; and that we may be taught of him to use the helps thereto, which others are well content not to be acquainted with.

And if we be thoroughly persuaded of this, that it is a liberty, a benefit, and honor to us, to hold our minds willing from day today to the reverent use of them; and be resolved, that we have no work more needful to be done of us any day then this: we shall not need to doubt of such fruit hereof, as is not to be repented of; even such, as will cause us to confess that the means and helps to grow in godliness, and a mind to use them daily against the discouragements and hindrances of the day, are a singular prerogative to a Christian. And otherwise, how precious soever they be in themselves, yet if we think not so of them, but shall be well content, by every light occasion to omit and neglect them, or slightly and hoverly to pass them over, I testify, that we shall get no good by them, no more than the common sort do: but as they have lost their beauty with us; so we shall lose our fruit of them. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding.

For be this known to the profanest and proudest contemner of God, which seldom, and only for fashion doth pray or hear a sermon, that these helps, whereby we grow constant in a Christian life, are not of little account because they are so with him; but that they are so

glorious that he is not worthy of them, nor to reap the profit that cometh by them: his light esteeming of them causeth me to set the more by them: his unsavoriness that he findeth in them and weariness of them, causeth me to commend them the more highly, and the more to admire the Lord's kindness to me, who maketh them so sweet and gainful to me, which are to him very gall and wormwood. For otherwise, how could they properly be called privileges, if they were alike precious to good and to bad? Or were in as good reckoning with the one, as with the other? For, the evil sort are not persuaded thus of them, therefore they find nothing. They either know not these helps, (which may truly be said of the most of them) or if they do, yet they know not how to use them in faith, especially (I may say) not constantly, one day as another, or one of them as well as another, (that it may go better with their souls thereby:) but think, that though they use them not at all, it is no great matter; and if they do use them, though it be but in ceremony and never so hoverly, then they think, that even for that very cause they highly please God. Which manner of using them, is never able to prove to them, what fruit and benefit may be reaped by them.

But we who believe in him, may know them, and rightly practice them, (though full weakly at some time we do it) and look for fruit by them, and enjoy it: and when we see what blessing he giveth us thereof, (as he doth, and that very great, to the end that we may have the better experience how many ways he keepeth promise with us, and how he enricheth us) then we wax more constant therein, and are the more hardly withdrawn by any occasions from holding out in the same. This (I say) we may do, although with grief it may be spoken, that many even of us, are too far off from enjoining this liberty as we might do. But let all such know, that it is their own sin, who cannot therefore praise God for this sweet help, while they be not the better for it. Therefore to shut up this point, let this be

persuaded to all God's faithful servants, that he hath of singular favor given the helps which settle them in a Christian life, as a great prerogative and privilege: and therefore, when under color of weakness we yield to the waywardness of our hearts, which are soon untoward to these gracious helps, and weary of them, we must repent of such unthankfulness, and of the nourishing of such fleshly liberty as shaketh off so needful duties. So shall we show ourselves wise, though the world count us fools; and be in good safety, when their danger shall be great.

Now I would have proceeded to lay forth before the Christian Reader another privilege, which in this place would very fitly come in; and that is, that God hath surely provided, that they who are thus far beautified and blessed of him, shall thus continue unto the end: but seeing it is the last that is enjoyed in this life, it shall have the last place among the temporal privileges. But yet I thought not amiss to mention such a thing here, both to stay them which after the hearing of so blessed beginnings and proceedings, would be glad to hear of the end answerable to them both: and also that they may look for it in the place assigned.

## **CHAP. 8.**

Of the sixth privilege: namely, of the right using of prosperity.

Now the next privilege that I think may most fitly be joined with the former, is: how the Lord hath taught his the right use of prosperity and adversity, and how they may carry themselves in peace, and be upright in both estates: two of the most principal parts of our life, seeing the greatest part of it doth go through them: for the most of it is accompanied with blessings or chastisements. The right use of both, although in some sort and in general may be gathered out of

the former discourses, and namely, of the third privilege: yet because they are distinct points, and it is hard to use them aright, and as precious as it is hard; I know it is very necessary to make a particular Treatise thereof. And first, more clearly to speak of the one, I say: God hath exceedingly declared his mercy and kindness this way to his people, that although prosperity be a slippery path, and riches and honor, health and friends, with all the other lawful pleasures, profits and liberties of this life do deceive and undo the greatest part of the world which enjoy and possess them; yet the beloved of the Lord may be free from this danger, and so directed that they need not be taken in these snares, nor make them their bane which are given them as blessings: this grace therefore if any shall be found to enjoy, they may be worthily said to be privileged above other men. Now to prove this, that God's children may use the world rightly (which is impossible for any other to do:) I do not mean, that because they have right unto earthly things through Christ, and are heirs with him of the blessings of the world, that therefore they do soberly and as they ought use the same; for many even of them, are (I confess) far from it, and therefore that which they want I labor to help them to: but as they are the persons which may be persuaded and brought to the right use of these outward liberties (and not the wicked;) so God draweth their hearts thereunto by his mighty power, whereby he is able to do all things.

For when he causeth this doctrine to be taught them: Of the contempt of the world, of contentation in their estate, of moderation and sobriety in lawful pleasures and profits &c. he imprinteth it in their hearts by the holy ghost: he maketh them able to believe that it is spoken to them, and therefore to apply it to themselves: he maketh them prove how this doctrine worketh in them, and try themselves by it, that where they see themselves to have gone beyond their bounds, they may return and bring their feet back into the way of his

testimonies: he, through the same doctrine, seasoneth their hearts, and wholly possesseth them with the love of it, that so their wants may be supplied, and they thereby may grow better practiced in this sobriety. And although the enjoining of earthly commodities be an alluring bait, and easy to make a man forget his mortality; as we see in Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, and others: yet the scripture giveth greater grace, as to Daniel, Job, and others who determined not to set their hearts on them.

But besides this, through further benefit of the scripture, God causeth his, to set oft before their eyes, the daily changes of all things under the sun: Ps. 102:26, the death of noble personages, friends and acquaintance; the most flourishing flowers to fade, and lose their beauty, and nothing to continue in one estate: and by the oft and deep considering of these, their hearts are much appalled, and the pride of life greatly abated in them. And as they grow daily to see more clearly their gain hereby, and that without these meditations upon examples and doctrine of death and mortality, &c. they cannot keep their hearts freed from infection by the world and earthly dealings: so do they more resolve with themselves daily, to think of them still; and to purge out their old and accustomed delighting's in worldly things, their dreams of long life, desire of ease, and increase of earthly commodities: with all which the devil stuffeth and filleth their brains, that while they begin to give themselves over to these, they may be persuaded strongly that there is no other happiness to be attained unto; and so thereby, destruction may suddenly come upon them.

Thus (I say) the Lord frameth his, to the contempt of the world, and to temperance and contentation, to desire no more than their most wise and provident father thinketh meet for them, nor no longer to enjoy any of their temporal liberties, then he shall see it to be



expedient. Thus he teacheth them both in wanting, to think themselves (yet) nevertheless beloved of God; and in the enjoining of abundance, not to think themselves the better for it nor to be proud of it: I say, he teacheth them; for neither bring they this grace with them from their cradle, but learn it; and study how to learn it so, as they may practice it: and yet they learn it not by their own wisdom, but by God, who is only able to teach it them: who by the means that I have showed, doth bring to pass, that they so buy, as if they possessed not; and so use the world, as that they abuse it not; so use marriage, as they are not hurt nor hindered from godly life by it, more than if they were unmarried, but much furthered and helped by it, neither neglect they thereby the caring for the things of the lord: but as two are better than one, so find they (as God hath appointed) much help thereby unto every good work. Neither, though they have much in the world, do they therefore love it much; but are glad to follow holy Job in that, when he said: If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the wedge of gold, Thou art my confidence: If I rejoiced because my substance was great, or because my hand had gotten much: this had been an iniquity to be condemned, for I had denied the God above. Therefore if these be great riches, liberties and privileges to enjoy; I mean, to have contentation in our estate, yea to be thankful to God in all things, not puffed up with prosperity, to acknowledge the uncertainty of our commodities, and therefore not to rest nor put confidence in them, nor to desire the increasing of them simply, much less by any indirect means, but to let them serve for the necessities of our brethren as well as for our own uses: now therefore, if these are the precious gifts of God, and yet that God frameth his servants to endeavor, and in some sort to do all these and such like; I hope it may truly be said, that he doth honor them highly, and privilege them greatly in working thus graciously in them.

But when all this is said, me thinks I hear diverse to object thus: We doubt nothing of the truth of all this, but that there have been such mentioned in the Scriptures: but what is that to us? Where are they in this our age who may be brought forth for such examples? I say, if the men could not easily be found, yet that hindereth not the doctrine to be true: but further I say as the truth saith, Ios. 1:5. As God hath done to others, so he will do to us; and his goodness is not abated towards us, more than it was in the ages past: yea rather, we have more near acquaintance with the will and mind of God, then many of them who are highly commended in the Scriptures; and in this latter age, God hath visited his people in a most gracious manner, bestowing his gifts and pouring out the graces of his spirit upon them abundantly. All which laid together, what can be gathered less than this, that when his children hear by the preaching of his word, all things under the sun to be transitory, vain and soon flitting away, and themselves also with them daily drawing unto an end, riches uncertain, beauty deceitful, health ever changing, friends always dying, &c. but that he causeth them to believe it, and therefore not to rest upon them? So when they hear, that they may not use them as they list, (no not the lawfullest of their liberties, as possessions, recreations, friends, time, &c.) that is, to pride, wantonness, idleness, excess, the wronging and hurting of others, but as helps to themselves and many others unto godliness; they are glad to hear their shepherds voice, and they know it and believe it and follow it, using these lawful benefits of God accordingly: I say, when they know by God's word, how they may use them which sometime they did not know, and that God giveth such grace to his, (and causeth the same to be published and preached) whereby they may be able to use all these outward blessings of God to their right ends, and so, as they become not baits and snares unto them; they rejoice and believe the same with thankful hearts, and so are made able to do the same, using their prayers and watch with their other

helps, to practice this point of godliness (namely, moderation and the true use of their lawful liberties) as they endeavor after all the rest.

For when they once be resolved, that it is the work which God setteth them about, and that he will strengthen and fit them for it, it doth mightily encourage them to take in hand and go about it: even as on the contrary, there is no stronger dismay of them, then when they set upon either this, or any other part of God's service by their own strength; that is, not knowing whether they may be bold to believe and be persuaded, that the Lord will give them power and hearten them unto the right performance of it, (for of that point the most of God's poor children are ignorant or not settled in faith about it) and therefore they doubt and fear, that they shall never come near or attain to that which they seek: by occasion of which weakness, the devil holdeth them in great discomfort; that although they would do the will of God in that which they go about, yet they stand at a stay, and are holden under many heavy discouragements for a long time. And yet are these far more faithful and simple hearted, howsoever they are feared by their own weakness, then they who think they please God highly, if they do anything in their own opinion more than others, how little warrant soever they have for it.

But to return to that which I said, that the Lord enableth his to govern themselves in the use of their goods and lawful liberties (which is a great privilege:) that I be not understood amiss, I think good to express my mind more clearly. If any should gather or think, that I mean all God's people do enjoy this liberty and prerogative: I answer, that I am far from that judgment. But as may be well seen by that which I have said, they who believe it, that God will make them fit for it how unfit soever they are of themselves, they shall enjoy it. I have propounded to prove no other thing. For by this it may appear,

that seeing God's children may be made partakers of such a treasure, which but few of them do enjoy (and of the unregenerate not one can:) therefore they beholding what he hath bequeathed them, they shall show, that they provide ill for themselves, if they attain not to that, being so great a benefit which God hath so freely bestowed upon them. There should need no more unto such, but this: that they may know, that he hath granted it out unto them freely, and calleth them everywhere, to the partaking of it: which being so, what should hold them back from enjoining it? That whereas the most are as brute beasts, servants to their lusts, yet these (of whom I speak) may captivate and subdue them: especially, seeing it is greater honor to them, to overcome their unruly passions, than to win a city.

As for those who count this honor, preciseness; and this embondaging of their unruly affections to be more than Christians need to be urged unto: what have I to do with them? They are the enemies of the cross of Christ, they turn the grace of God into wantonness, they make lawful liberties to become unlawful through their ill using of them. Of whom this I say, which I will only say: that they will bring unto them the swifter damnation. To which kind of people, and to their like objecting thus and demanding: What? Do these whom you commend so highly for their good government and temperance in the use of lawful things, always keep one and the same course? I say, they most of all endeavor after that; and how full of sadness soever it be and tedious to others, yet to them it is sweet and pleasant: insomuch, that although they be sometime deceived by the devil, and driven from their hold, yet as soon as they perceive that they have gone too far, and have passed their bounds in their lawful liberties, eating, drinking, recreation, use of marriage, pleasuring in goods, trusting in friends, and making flesh their arm; they return speedily as out of open and manifest sins, and thereby become more careful another time: and when they see how many buffets light upon

others, who have small regard of sobriety or measure keeping; they see their portion to be great in restraining themselves from that excess in lawful things, which they keep no measure in. And thus much be said of the first part or branch of this privilege. Wherein may be seen, that the Lord hath offered great favor to his children, (to so many as esteem of it) that the glory of present things and prosperity in this world (which undo many) shall (yet) not bewitch nor deceive them; but they shall be able to escape these snares by the spiritual wings that he hath given them for that purpose, to mount above them, as godly Joseph, Moses and many of God's dear servants did before them.

But if it be asked: Why hath he given them to one and not to another? I answer: Seeing one setteth more store by it than another. I speak it to the shame of those who give occasion, though they be otherwise well to be hoped of. For the custom and boldness in this sin of intemperance and worldliness which we see in the most men, doth draw after them and their example, some even of those which are religious; causing them to have their teeth set on edge, so eagerly to follow them in their profane course: and the abundance of iniquity doth cool their fervency in seeking to wean their hearts from such poisoned and deceitful baits and dainties as they see them so greedily to devour. For otherwise, though they are frail, yet having received a taste of the heavenly doctrine, which is the only mother and nourisher of true sobriety, they should not so easily forget themselves and be overcome of their vain desires. For if popish dreams and fantasies without all ground of God's word, have so enchanted princes and other persons of great possessions, that they have drawn them from their pomp and many solemnities, into Monasteries and Nunneries for the deceivable hope of salvation: should not the word of truth much more prevail with them who have had a right taste of it, to renounce dangerous and unlawful liberties?

And although they were led from one error to another; yet if error might do so much with them, should not the truth do much more with the children of the truth, to abide in it and be governed by it? It is pity, that any of the Lord's beloved should offer such dishonor to the glorious word of God, as to refuse the government of it, and give occasion to the unbelievers to say: That God dieteth his people so meanly in his own house, that they be driven to eat with the intemperate at their table (as it were) their poisoned dainties. But let this reproof make any such of God's servants ashamed, as have given occasion of it: and let them not follow the excess of such as know no better. And when they shall find this doctrine hard to be practiced, that is, to use their prosperity rightly and soberly; if then such matter as this is, were read and well weighed of them, and the examples of those which are contrarily minded, what bondage they are in, I doubt not, but that the hardness which they complain of, should in good measure be asswaged.

## **CHAP. 9.**

Of the seventh privilege: Concerning the afflictions of the godly; and namely, of the first branch of the same; that is, how they may be free from many of those troubles, which do light on and meet with the unreformed.

Now followeth the prerogative that they have about afflictions. Of the which although they are not void: yet if we diligently mark God's dealing with them herein, we must needs confess, that he showeth exceeding favor unto them. Which seeing it is not one way but many and sundry, declared unto them: I will in some order (as I can) lay them forth particularly. And they may all be referred to three kinds. For first, he holdeth many tribulations from them altogether in that

they be his children, which others by their sins do pluck upon themselves, Ps. 32:10,11. Secondly, he delivereth them out of many, which otherwise would sore oppress them, when yet he leaveth others in them still. And thirdly, he teacheth them, aright and well to bear them, when he thinketh it not meet to deliver them. And of these three, I will handle the first in this chapter.

Concerning the which point, it may easily be gathered by that which hath been said of the former privileges, how true this is: that many troubles never take hold of such as walk after those rules which I have spoken of, and which enjoy the said privileges: and seeing all God's children be such as may do so, therefore even they may be delivered from many troubles and afflictions (one as well as another) which yet the ungodly and unregenerate cannot escape. For they whose hearts are cleansed and sanctified, so that they truly hate all manner of sin, and more specially renounce in their lives the sin which they know; who endeavor to have a good conscience in all things, and do all this with delight; and with delight also do daily use the means to grow forward in this course: how can the plagues and calamities take hold on them, which do on other men who are strangers to such a course? For the greatest and sorest punishments and troubles that fall upon any, are brought upon them by their sin (contrary to the erroneous opinion of them, who think that religion is the chief cause of troubles) and they are nothing else but the fruit thereof; and the greater sinners that men are, the sharper and heavier judgments outward or inward do meet with and take hold of them, and the deeper doth God draw his bow against them: and wherein is the scripture more plentiful, then in this argument and matter? For sin, came the first punishment into the world, namely, death and God's curse, which without sin had never been known in all the world, with the casting off our first parents and their posterity out of the favor of God. Through sin, came all kinds of plagues and

punishments upon men; as hunger, nakedness, diseases, the pestilence, bondage to enemies and invasion of them, imprisonment, loss of goods, loss of life, and such like. For sin, both person and place, whole cities and villages have been destroyed: from the king to the beggar, both Pharaoh and the rascal soldiers that pierced Christ through and platted a crown of thorns upon his head, and Judas the purse-bearer who was also the traitor; even all these did by sin purchase to themselves the reward of iniquity. All which plagues, they which were void of those sins and the like which they committed, were freed from.

But I shall not need to say much of this matter which is clear in all men's eyes: and yet I must say that which I do in this place, because it is the ground of this discourse. For if this be true, that troubles and punishments are the fruit of sin, and that they who decline and go aside from the way of sinners, shall not taste of them; it followeth that the children of God who do so, have a singular prerogative above others, and may be free from many sore vexations. Neither should this seem strange or admirable, forasmuch as they forsake many unlawful liberties and vain pleasures which others hunt after.

But as I have said in handling the former privileges, so I must say in this: that the servants of God may enjoy this liberty; but not, that all do so. For experience proveth the contrary: namely, that sundry of God's people do draw upon themselves many troubles through their own default, which they might have been void of, and do trouble themselves when God doth not trouble them: and it is one cause why I did enter into this work, to teach such how they may live more at ease and in safety and without many incumbrances in this world, then they do or many think they may possibly do. For a great number, even of God's children, do persuade themselves through ignorance of the scriptures (Math. 22:29) that forasmuch as they



hear, that we must go through many tribulations to the kingdom of heaven, therefore it can be no otherwise with us, but that we must of necessity smart and be afflicted as oft and as many ways as we are; which is nothing so: for many troubles and dangers we might shun and avoid by taking heed to ourselves, as God's word teacheth us, yea and as his spirit enableth us also to do; which yet through our folly, security, sloth and such other faults of ours, too often do vex and disquiet us, and make our lives utterly unsavory and unpleasant unto us. For who can deny this, that many honest Christians as well as worse persons, do cause a great part of their lives to be filled with unquietness, anguish and irksomeness, (then the which what can be reckoned greater troubles) and that, through impatience, anger, fretting, rashly meddling in other men's matters, and intemperately following and dealing in their own; which unbridled affections others of their brethren wisely and carefully seeking and laboring to resist, prevent and govern, are not molested nor troubled with?

Or who seeth not this: that, even men who deserve to be well thought of for many causes, yet in some particular things refusing to be directed aright, and following their own will, and carried by their evil affections, take liberty to themselves to mispend the time in foolish jesting, idle and harmful talking, in lightness, in wantonness of the eye, evil companionship, &c. for the which sweet meat they have afterwards sour sauce: and by those means only, raise up in their hearts secret accusations, checks of conscience, horror and fear of death and the judgment day, quenching of the spirit of God, and such like; and the better men they be, the sooner and certainlier they are thus rewarded. Are not these troubles? Which if they had been careful to avoid, they might have lived merrily and with good contentation, as other good servants of God have done, and do, who have set more by true peace and quietness with holiness, (without

which no man shall see the Lord) then to lose it for a little piece of their will, and for the enjoining of the pleasures of sin for a season.

But these troubles because they are inward, are not of so many nor so easily seen and discerned as were to be wished, although too many, both godly and wicked, do oft both find and feel them. I will therefore show this in outward troubles; how many Christians do as well through their sin trouble and encumber their lives with them, as with the other kind. For by their sin (as willful blindness, carelessness and unbridled affections) even they as well as men utterly unreformed, do bring upon themselves shame, suits in law, poverty, debt, diseases, imprisonment, losses, ill report, wicked posterity, &c. These and such like (I am sure) the ignorantest and worst sort of people do count troubles and miseries, and cry out of them, till they do oftentimes deprive themselves of life to the end they may be rid of them. But to prove that they trouble themselves with all these by their sins, is it not a shame to them, when they be found to have been deceivers, liars, boasters, slanderers, and in such other behavior offensive and scandalous? And doth not the same bring ill report with them also? Doth not rashness, hot and hasty speeches, provoking one another cause suits and controversies which need never have been, and rendering like hard measure again, as hath been offered? Do not debt and poverty arise of needless and excessive spendings, going above our ability in diet, apparel, purchasing and building; and doth not he which loveth pastime, prove a poor man? So by surfeiting some diseases; and ill posterity by ill education, with too much connivency and liberty giving; and by rash and unequal marriages as hasty repenting's for their conceived griefs, if not departing's one from the other; and an haughty mind causeth him that nourisheth it, oft times to take up his abode within the prison walls. These are a few of a great many which might as well be reckoned up, but that I would say no more then I must needs.

And what are the troubles of the world, if these be not? And yet who seeth not, that all these and their like are drawn upon many Christians by their sin, as sore corrections from God, seeing they do, and may easily, through want of care and watchfulness, oft offend thus. And true it is, that they might be well avoided, if sin were taken heed of and resisted, and by labor and watchfulness the unruly heart subdued. Neither let any answer me, that this cannot be attained: for I affirm, that God giveth such grace unto frail men whereby it may be attained to, and teacheth how; and many there are (God have the glory thereof) which comfortably find it, who because they hate to be servants to any sin (although they cannot walk without sin) receive no such wages of sin and iniquity as others do.

And by this which I say, let it be considered, what ease and peace and freedom from many troubles this sort of men enjoy in their lives, which others go without; and what sorrow and calamities some fill their days with, which both they themselves, and many others might be void of. So that it is not as many have ignorantly thought, that their troubles cannot be avoided; but (as I have said) many of them might be shunned, and their lives might be many ways and in sundry respects more pleasant and quiet then they be: which causeth some that see it to be thus with diverse Christians, (and yet that these their troubles are not for well doing, but by their own folly and procuring) causeth them (I say) to be so far from the love of true religion as they be: for whose sake, if we will not do it to make our own lives more comfortable, we should abstain from offenses; seeing the woe that is pronounced, will otherwise, certainly come upon upon us: Woe to him that causeth another to fall.

But such men are ready to excuse and answer for themselves, saying, that all cannot be alike, nor all cannot do as some may: which objection unless it be of pure simplicity, is a sign rather that they will

go forward, then seek to recover. But whatsoever, or whose soever it be, I answer, Let the weak endeavor to follow the stronger: and if any have attained to more than other, in knowledge and experience of the mind and will of God, of them let others learn and take such for their example: but let none please themselves in that which they do, as though they could not attain to any better, but aim at further ripeness and measure of perfection, deadly disliking their smallest sins, rather than excusing and defending those which are great: and then it shall be verified that is written, to their no small comfort: To him that hath, it shall be given, and he shall have abundance: and he that seeketh in humility, shall find and enjoy plenteously: and he that reverenceth the gifts and graces of other, shall have a part in them himself, and not envy other for them.

And as for the troubles which we speak of, let no man think that we may rejoice in them, seeing we are dehorted from them by the Apostle Peter, saying: Let no man suffer as an evil doer; seeing they are for just cause upon us to vex and disquiet us, rather than that they can be any matter of joy and gladness to us, except by godly sorrow they bring us to repentance, which (alas) is the least part of their thought who commit them. The Lord taketh no pleasure in seeing us to trouble ourselves, and by our sins to bring vexation into our lives; but showeth us in his word how much it displeaseth him, that we should be so much our own foes, and unwise for our own good, and that we should by our sins hold so many good things from us. For so doth the prophet tell us, that our sins keep many blessings from us. And if they be our sins, that is, our known sins, our willful sins, and those which are committed through our own default and folly, then let us thank our selves, and let us charge our sins, and not the Lord; in that, while we suffer so great and many troubles by them, we have reaped thereby the just fruit of our own labors. And

seeing the sin might and ought to have been avoided; therefore such troubles as they have caused, might also have been prevented.

And this is that which I have gone about to prove, for the comfort of my brethren: that many of us who belong to the Lord, do find more troubles and afflictions then we need to do, and that through our own sin. And therefore I conclude, seeing it is so: that the Lord who guideth his servants in a more holy course then many of the other sort are content to be guided in, doth thereby grant them this privilege and liberty: that they do escape and are delivered from infinite troubles and calamities, which others who count godliness to strict and precise a course for them, do oft rush and run into.

Oh that this might enter into them deeply and do them good, for whose cause chiefly I have spoken it; I mean, many of God's people: who although they have some love to their brethren, and embrace the gospel heartily and reverently, and have many other good things in them, (it behooveth me so to judge of them) yea generally they propound to themselves a good course, namely to live after the gospel: yet particularly, are such in their lives as bring small glory to the gospel, but pass over many parts of their lives with very slight examination, as they do also the government of their hearts. Which faults notwithstanding they be convinced of, yet will they not yield, but go forward in them still: and as for those things which they may lawfully do, although they offend never so manifoldly in and about the same in manner of doing them, yet will they by no means be counseled to redress that which is amiss: in whom it is no hard thing to see, how dear they pay for their liberties, which they will have whatsoever they cost them. They would hold peace with God, and sometimes find comfort in good things; but when that faileth (as it doth very oft) their lives would become very irksome and tedious unto them, if they made not themselves merry in some earthly and

transitory thing: and so they make flesh their arm, which is to deny the Almighty.

Their defense, for that they do not more particularly direct their ways aright, is; that Jesus Christ hath given them liberty and set them free; and that they have no discretion, who urge their brethren so strictly; and such like: which all are but fig leaves to cover their nakedness. For they see (though they would not) oftentimes, that thus living they please not God: neither (if they advisedly mark it) do they please themselves. Their disquietnesses, checks of conscience and secret accusations they cannot but feel, and many outward troubles do meet with them, as hath been said: and while they seek the cause afar off, behold, it is near unto them; yea at hand, even within them: their will, their untamed affections, the sturdiness and unruliness of their hearts and this their sin hath found them out.

These therefore I exhort to consider with no worse minds than I have written it, what hath been said: and the Lord give them grace so to do: yea, and let such godly Christians whose teeth yet do sometime water at the dainties of those, though they see what sorrow and reproach they sustain for them, thank God heartily that they taste not of such poisoned dainties with them.

But now that I have showed, how the Lord doth preserve them from sundry, yea infinite troubles, who set their hearts to walk with him in one thing as in another, (behold, such honor and prerogatives his servants may have) I cannot pass by the devilish (and yet foolish) policy of some who do shun to be religious of purpose, because they would be void of sorrow and trouble. They sing the song of the rich man in S. Luke, that in their life time they will have their pleasure whatsoever it cost them when their reckoning cometh in: and of the Epuicure; Let us eat and drink, &c. and say with the young man in

Ecclesiastes: They will rejoice in their youth, and enjoy the delights of sin, though it be but for a season. But they mark not that answer to him in the Gospel: Thou in thy life time receivedst thy pleasure, therefore now thou art tormented; nor to the young man, by the Preacher, what was said: Know, that for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment. No such thing (I say) they do consider; but all that they observe, is this: How the better that men are for the most part, the less they are set by, as it is said: I have seen the just to perish in his justice: and the less men fashion themselves after this present world, the less they may (they see) depart from a good conscience, and be merry after the common manner; which these objectors count an irksome and tedious thing.

Again, they see that as the most part of men among whom the godly live, have them in some indignation and vile account; so that they do by means thereof, sustain mocks, taunts, checks and complaints before their betters, with cruel threatening's, and in persecution times that they are convented, imprisoned, railed on, yea and oft times put to death. These things (I say) they only look at with carnal eyes, and therefore are easily brought to beware, that they come not near their course: but they neither consider, that they suffer for righteousness sake, and therefore that they are blessed; neither, that they themselves and such as they are, live in darkness and after the lust of their eye and heart, and that their pleasures [diminish] away as the cracking of thorns under a pot, and afterward they must come to their heavy and unwelcome account. Besides this, though they have sorrow and vexation daily in their lives, by means of their sin, unless they break it off through foolish mirth and vanity for a while: yet partly they see it not, neither count it any; as to be cast into fretting, frowardness, strife, debate, &c. And if they do purchase any trouble by their deserts and ill doings, as shame, charge by the purse, and other punishment; yet they will choose to suffer much this way,

rather than they will be driven from their will, and the enjoining of their fond liberties.

And now let all wise men judge, what these kinds of men have gained by following their sinful course: let (I say) the uttermost of their gain and pleasure be considered, and what troubles they have shunned in shunning to live godly. But when they have done, seeing the Lord hath sufficiently confirmed this: that plagues abide the ungodly, and (that they may be sure of it) that their sin shall find them out; let none look to provide well for himself that way, namely, to shun and be far from the sincere practice of a religious and godly life, to the end he may be free from troubles: for he can no other way more certainly and speedily multiply them. And whereas it is objected, that the best of God's servants are not free from troubles, but suffer much for their profession and a good conscience: it is granted. But their troubles for those causes, are of another kind, namely, fatherly chastisements to hold them in from perishing with the world; or trials of their patience, faith and other graces of God in them; or such as they suffer for good causes; and so weep and lament, when the world is jocund and merry: and therefore they turn ever to their profit, as I shall have occasion to show more plentifully in another place more fit for that purpose. And to conclude, let all know this, that though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and God prolongeth his days; yet that it shall be well with them that fear the Lord, and do reverence before them. And thus much of the first point in this second branch of this privilege, that the godly may live void of many and great troubles: and therefore, that such as do not, may thank themselves for it, whether we understand inward distrust and fear, or outward punishments that are fruits of sin.

## **CHAP. 10.**



Of the second branch of this privilege, concerning the afflictions of the faithful: namely, That God delivereth them out of many, when the wicked still remain in theirs.

The second point is, that they may also assure themselves, that the Lord will deliver them (and that of very favor) out of many troubles, though they see not how: even as I have showed, that some shall not touch them at all. For although they themselves see not how, nor any other likelihood but that they shall long oppress them, yea utterly consume them; yet even then doth the Lord know how to deliver them, and hath many ways, which we could not see, to rid them out of so great calamities: and so he doeth, either before they have long lien upon them, or at least, before they have been driven to any extremity by them, and before they have had their course; as in the deliverances of David, mentioned 1. Sam. 19:20,23,24, and 26 chapters throughout, is to be seen. And this he doth as oft as it is expedient: when in the mean season he dealeth not so with the unbelievers, but when the other escape, they come many times in their room, as the wise man saith: The godly escape out of trouble by the Lord's delivering of them, and the wicked are come in their stead. Now for proof of that which I said [that God delivereth them out of many] what is more plain then that which the prophet saith: If the Lord had not been on our side, (may Israel now say) if the Lord had not been on our side when men rose up against us, they had then swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us, &c. But praised be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey unto their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, the snare is broken, and we are escaped. The Apostle proveth it also in his words: We would not have you ignorant (brethren) of our affliction which came unto us in Asia, how we were pressed out of measure, passing strength, so that we altogether doubted even of life:

but God delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver us; in whom we trust also that he will deliver us.

The dangers of God's people under the government of king Ahasuerus, who knoweth not? How had that wicked Haman by malice and subtlety obtained of the king, commission to take their goods and put them to death? The day was set, and all preparation made for the bringing of it to pass: and yet before it could be effected, how did the Lord at the humble suit of Mardocheus and the Queen Hester in prayer and fasting, seeking unto him, turn away the plague from them, and delivering them, bring their enemies and Haman the first of all the rest (as he was the chiefest) into their room? Even as Daniel was delivered out of the lions den (the Lord shutting their mouths that they should not hurt him:) but his accusers being thrown in after that he was delivered, the lions had the mastery over them, and brake their bones or ever they came at the ground of the den. The whole story of the Bible is full of such examples: wherein this is most clearly to be seen, how God hath delivered his, trusting in him, from and out of many and great dangers and calamities. So that if God do this for his, then his servants may assuredly look for it.

And yet I would all should know, that I do not bring these, as I might many others to this end, only that I might prove that God hath delivered his children out of troubles: for so hath he done the wicked also (as Ishmael in the wilderness, and the Philistines from Saul:) neither is that the thing which either I intend; or if I did, were that any privilege or peculiar blessing to the godly, forasmuch as the wicked may have their part in it as well as they: But I bring these examples to prove, that God's people may be sure that he will of fatherly love deliver them from many, namely, when they have sought unto God in their troubles (to God, I say, and not to

creatures;) assuring themselves, that as it is he that hath smitten them, so he shall heal them. And in that they have used those means for their deliverance, which God hath taught them to use, namely, fasting and prayer with confidence, as Mardocheus, Jehoshaphat, &c and in that they have rested upon God, as they did in the Psalm 124. 8, and 20:7, and not on a bruised reed, as oftentimes Israel did; and in that when they do look for deliverance certainly, they have first a promise thereof from God, as Joshua had against the king of Hazor and his company; and Gideon against the Amalekites and the Midianites: when they do (I say) obtain deliverance thus, and after this manner, this is a singular privilege unto them: for then they know that it cometh from God, and therefore they may have great comfort therein, and receive such deliverances as pledges of his favor.

And thus are God's servants only delivered out of their troubles: the ungodly have no part with them in this fellowship. And yet I do not say, that even they are always thus affected and furnished with this grace, always to believe and look for it, as oft as God delivereth them out of any dangers and troubles (that is it indeed which they should daily aim at:) and yet they can have no sound comfort to their hearts more than other men have, unless they do thus wait upon God by sound hope, and seek to him in their necessities and distresses after this manner; but have only outward help and succor, or an end of their troubles, as the wicked may have; little considering from whence they come, or whether they have them in God's favor or displeasure.

But before I go any further, I must here answer an objection. For it will be demanded of me: What profit may we reap by the examples before alleged? (Whereby I proved, that deliverances out of adversities and dangers are not privileges, except they have a

promise thereof from God before, and believe the same:) What is that to us will these men say, forasmuch as God doth not at any time speak unto us, as he did in ages past unto our fathers? Jehoshaphat indeed, they say, might well and easily be persuaded, that God would give the Moabites (his enemies) into his hand, when he by his prophet had said to him: Tomorrow go out against them, and the Lord will be with thee. So Joshua, and in like manner Gideon: but where hath God thus spoken to any of his faithfulest servants in this last age of the world, personally or particularly in trouble (say they) that he will deliver him and remove his afflictions from him? Therefore none of them can be certain thereof, and therefore not so well ordered in their troubles as they were.

I answer: That God doth not indeed speak to us after that manner that he did to our fathers, as we are certified in the epistle to the Hebrews; but hath left his whole mind to us in his word, wherein he hath so fully declared his will in all things as is sufficient, and in the weightiest matters he hath spoken as plainly to us as to them. And concerning this one thing, namely, of delivering us out of distresses and afflictions: if they be inward (as sins and corruptions) he hath promised (if we believe the same) that he will give us grace to mortify our sin; and if we do not overcome and subdue the same as we would, yet that his grace shall be sufficient for us: and the best of our forefathers had no more. If they be outward visitations, and crosses, as sicknesses, poverty. &c. he hath promised also, that if it be expedient and for the best to us he will pull us out of them; and howsoever he do in our sufferings, that which he doth, shall be the best for us. And there was no other thing said to the body of the church in the former ages, but general promises which were made to all the faithful (excepting that for some especial causes some particular promise of deliuerence was made to some certain persons, and for weighty causes; and yet those were not made for all times,

nor in all troubles:) as may be seen by the answer of David, who being driven out of Jerusalem by his son Absalom rising up against him most traitorously and unnaturally, said unto Zadok the priest, Carry the ark of God again into the city: If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and the tabernacle thereof: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good in his eyes.

It is clear by this, that David in his trouble did not know whether God would deliver him or no; neither did he know what the end should be; nor had any promise from God, that he should return again to Jerusalem in peace, and behold the ark and tabernacle anymore: yet David sought to the Lord, and humbled himself, and was not so amazed with the affliction (as strange as it was) but that he remembered the Lord, and prayed to him, and worshipped in token that he had made God his stay and defense, whatsoever the issue of his sore trial should be. The like is to be seen in the example of Sidrach, Misach and Abednego: who when they heard the straight charge of king Nabucadnezar, That whosoever should not at the sound of the instruments of music fall down and worship the image which he had set up, should be cast into the midst of an hot fiery furnace immediately, answered the king and said: O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. Behold, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the hot fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king; but if he do not, be it known unto thee (O king) that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. We see they knew not whether God would deliver them or no: but this they were persuaded of, that he had a most tender and fatherly care over them, and would show the same in the time of their need; and if it were for his glory he would deliver them. &c.

And now (to return to ourselves) if we in our tribulations be thus upholden by the general promises of God, if we sue and seek to him with this condition to be delivered [If it be expedient in his eyes] endeavoring to be contented with that which shall fall out on either side, we have behaved ourselves as it became us, we have sought to him aright as his word teacheth us: and if we after this obtain deliverance, God hath heard us, he hath kept promise with us, and we have received good proof of our faith. And who can deny, but that it is a great privilege when we obtain deliverance thus? And thus doing, although we be not delivered, yet we rest persuaded (howsoever our weak nature hold back) that the Lord hath done justly and well; hoping with such confidence, as of frail flesh may be obtained, for answerable strength and consolation unto the measure of our afflictions in our greatest need. And if men see no great matter in this, let them wade a little deeper, and weigh how they are upholden by their faith that they fall not to shifts and unlawful means (when otherwise they see no way to escape) as the unbelievers do; and namely, Saul with other, who waiting upon lying vanities, forsook God's goodness: neither are stricken with deadness, as Nabal when he heard heavy tidings; nor with distrust and despair, as Judas; neither with complaining and murmuring at God, as his own children sometime when they are not upholden by faith, are forced to do. And yet if we have deliverance any other way, as by carnal policy, subtle shifts, or the like, (as I do not deny, but by such means it may come) it is so far off that we should count that a privilege or any matter of rejoicing, that it maketh our affliction double, yea ten-fold thereby, which was in a manner none at all before.

And thus I conclude this other point, affirming, that as it is a singular prerogative to us, that we may be kept from many troubles altogether, which other cannot be freed from: so it is no less honor, privilege and favor, that we may be delivered out of many (which

others shall not be delivered from) as I have showed and proved in this present point; but yet then only it is a privilege (as I have said) that we may be delivered, not when we use unlawful means for it, but when we look for it thus: [If God will: if he see it good and expedient] and therefore do wait patiently until he send an issue: which grace the unbelievers never have, neither can have: only God's children are capable of it; but for all that, few even of them enjoy it, as either never having learned it soundly and clearly, or not believing that they may possibly attain to it: which causeth so much uncheerfulness, discontent, &c. in our troubles, as grudging against God, yea and indirect shifts to avoid them; and much hollowness, coldness and negligence in the service of God and Christian carriage of ourselves before trouble cometh, for fear that when it cometh we shall be inconstant: whereas, if it were otherwise, much heavenly comfort might be reaped in our lives, which now is not.

## **CHAP. 11.**

Of the third branch of this privilege: That we may have much good by our afflictions.

The third point of this second branch now followeth, which is no less than a great privilege itself beside the two former, and that is: that the Lord teacheth his children aright and well to bear those afflictions, which he thinketh meet to try them with and to hold them under. So that they may not only endure and go under them patiently and contentedly, but also receive much good by them, as they themselves be constrained to confess. And as the Lord teacheth his people to make this use of their afflictions: so everyone of his, may also learn the same, if they be wise enough to think so; that is, to be resolved that for their exceeding benefit and profit he sendeth them.

For then and never till then, they frame and address themselves to receive them from God thankfully and meekly, when his word hath thoroughly settled this thought and persuasion in them: which wisdom few have or attain unto, thus to think, but their own foolish reason; which (while they seek nothing but ease and freedom from trouble) leadeth them a clean contrary way, that is, to be utterly unwilling to bear them, even discouraged and heavy hearted as oft as they think on them. This wisdom therefore must be sought for, even of the good servants of God: that they look for them daily, and be ready to receive them from God. This it is, that must suppress and check all contrary power of carnal reason, which will be otherwise in the way at all times to annoy them.

It followeth therefore next and most consequently to declare, how the poor people of God may come by this wisdom: and then to show, how it guideth them to make such profitable and good use of their crosses and chastisements, as no other but they are able to do the same. Saint James going about to persuade the Christians which were dispersed by reason of persecution, to receive their afflictions meekly and joyfully, (fearing that there were not many which could do so) showed them; that it was for want of this wisdom in them, whosoever rebelled under the hand of God; and that they ought to be thoroughly persuaded that God sent them for their benefit and good. And then he goeth forward to teach them, how they might come by it; and that he teacheth them thus: If any man want wisdom let him ask it of God, who giveth to everyone plentifully, and casteth no man in the teeth: but this watchword he giveth: That they must see, they ask in faith, and they shall obtain it. Then for our instruction and edifying let us know, that, if we desire to be partakers of this privilege, to welcome our afflictions, to bear them cheerfully, and to have them turn to our great benefit (which the most do think will turn to their undoing;) then as we hold this principle of the Apostle



to be a truth: that All things work for the best to them which love God; so we must be wise to think the same of our own afflictions: and if we cannot easily be so persuaded (as no man is for the most part) we must be earnest with God, and that oft and from time to time, that our will may yield to God's will, and we may think that good for us which he thinketh good.

And to the end we may bring our hearts to this, let us weigh to and fro, what we can object against it why we need not submit ourselves unto God: that when all our carnal reasons shall be answered, as being too weak to prevail with us, we may refer the whole course of our lives to be governed by him: and what corrections soever he shall think meet for us, and to try us with and for our benefit, and to keep us from further hurt, (for he hath no worse end in chastising of us) that then we may remember, in all things to be thankful, and take up our cross readily and welcome it, seeing we know the end of it. And let it not be thought much that I say, He hath no worse end in afflicting us: for we ought to be persuaded thoroughly of this, that the Lord our God loving us, he cannot intend our hurt in the least manner, howsoever it shall please him to exercise us. For we may be sure, that he afflicteth not willingly, nor at any time but when it is meet and expedient for us: and as our Savior said to his beloved Apostles of his bodily departing from them, (which was the greatest outward cross that could befall them:) It is expedient that I go away from you, for otherwise the comforter cannot come unto you: so would he have us to think, that if it were not for our troubles we should never have such comfort as we have, which doth certainly follow the patient bearing of them.

And here consider the causes why God sendeth them to his beloved ones: which being known and rightly weighed, are of sufficient force to work their great benefit and comfort. First, that they may have

experience from how many troubles he delivereth then; and know after, how to look for the like help in the like trouble: secondly, that they may have proof of their faith and patience, which worketh unspeakable comfort: thirdly, that they may not be condemned with the world: fourthly, that by them, as the body by physic, they may be purged from their sinful dross and fear him: and fifthly, that the Lord may thereby wean them from the world (to the which they are so glued) as a child is from the breast (by bitter things) which would not otherwise leave it. So that if we be thus taught of God and learn this wisdom of him, to believe, that to these ends and of very love and faithfulness he afflicteth us whensoever he doth it, we shall be sure to find it so, to our exceeding comfort.

And although for a while we be tried, and therein may seem to be neglected and forgotten of him; when others shake off the Lord's yoke, and shun the troubles by an evil conscience, which he layeth upon them: yet when they shall after be plunged into dangers without recovery, then shall ours be at an end, and our rejoicing never cease nor be taken from us. Through this faith David comforted himself in his God, when wicked men consulted to take way his life. Through this wisdom which I have spoken of, (an inseparable companion of faith) he said when his troubles were sore and great: I have held my peace, because thou (O Lord) haddest done it: and that God was most loving unto him for all that. And so when by this wisdom and faith he had waited patiently on God, he reaped experience and gladness as the fruit thereof, which he himself expresseth in these words, saying: It is good for me (O Lord) that I have been afflicted. And the like speeches he uttered at sundry times in many of his psalms, which for brevity sake I omit: whereby it may be gathered, that from time to time he was thus upholden in his troubles; and therefore that he enjoyed this liberty and privilege in his life, to find his very crosses profitable and good unto him.

The same may be said of Abraham, both at many other times, and namely when he left his own country and his fathers house, to go to a place which God should show him: where he being a stranger and had not a foot of ground to possess, yet having leisure to return, would not; but waited upon God to know his pleasure: which he would never have done, if he had not been persuaded, that the affliction was best for him, which God did try him with. Joseph had no other thing to uphold him when he was sold, put in prison, and his feet pinned in the stocks.

And to be short, if this trouble us: that, although these worthy servants of God, and many other, had this wisdom to take their troubles aright, and in such meek manner that they seemed not greatly to trouble them; yet we may not look to do so: to this end, let the Apostles words direct and counsel us; he saith: If any man want this wisdom, let him ask it of God, and it shall be given. Loe, he excepteth none (which do not except themselves) of such as know what faith is, and who are able to ask in faith (as all the Lord's may be bold to do;) for he addeth: But let him ask in faith. And: Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved: for, how can we call upon him, on whom we have not believed? So that if any such be destitute of this wisdom, they may thank themselves, it is their own fault.

But to satisfy some, (who, I know, are many) which looking to the Apostles words [ that all turneth to the best to such as love God] and look no further: whereupon they conclude, if God will have our troubles turn to our good, what need we take any further thought about the matter? I answer: They which believe that, will not be careless in their afflictions, how they be affected under them; whether they lie down blockishly and senselessly under them, or whether they storm and be impatient in them: but will do as David

did in all his troubles, (who laid them to heart, and prayed for grace to bear them and for deliverance out of them, though he was sure God would give a good end of them: even as Daniel also did. ) And if they behave themselves willfully, carelessly or foolishly in them, they shall see them turn to their exceeding hurt and vexation: so far is it off, that they should reap good thereby, they know not how. For the Scripture, which teacheth that afflictions are sent them for their good, doth not profit them, if it be not mixed with faith in them that hear it, Heb. 4:2.

But if they believe that Scripture to be written for them, and apply it; then they receive their crosses from God as sent to them in his love, they murmur not against him, neither refuse to be chastised of him, but are thankful, and therefore labor for patience, that it may have her perfect work: yea and further, if they can find any sin in themselves which might draw these corrections of the Lord upon them, they heartily turn from it with all possible speed, that so they may more confidently entreat the Lord to turn away all the tartness of their affliction from them. And they which after this manner behave themselves under the cross, although they perform these duties but in weakness, shall find their troubles, howsoever for the time irksome unto the flesh, yet to be gainful many ways and in many respects unto their souls.

For they shall give them a proof of that grace, as meekness, trust and confidence, which otherwise they could not know to be in them. They shall teach them also experience of greater acknowledging God's fatherly kindness, which worketh and bringeth forth these sweet graces in them, by as unlikely occasions, as the soft waters gush out of the hard and stony rock: for in others, what do afflictions cause for the most part that have them, but rage and fretting and such like? Besides, in those who are rightly exercised in the bearing of them,

they hold them from many sins which others run into: [4:5.] they make them more humble and thankful: they hearten them by custom therein to bear greater, yea greater than they thought possible that ever they should have gone under: and with all these cometh most sound and exceeding comfort, in the end at least, with hope in the midst of them, which shall not make them ashamed.

Therefore if the servants of God may enjoy these with many other such commodities by their afflictions, and have so good liking of the Christian life that they will not forsake it for the greatest of them, I conclude this third branch as the two former: That the Lord hath not left their afflictions upon them to vex them, and make their lives wearisome and unpleasant to them; but that they should receive much good and benefit by them. And although they be not without sharpness, yet the Christian life hath so many sweet fruits of them therewith, that as men are not weary of the pleasant spring time though it be annoyed with the flea: so we do not loath our afflicted estate being so many ways gainful, for some bitterness that accompanieth the same: for holy security through the favor of God, a good conscience, and confidence of our cause that it is good, maketh even a hard state easy, or at least tolerable. And these privileges which I have now spoken of, who can sufficiently marvel that our glorious God doth communicate to mortal men, yea vile sinners, which were once without God in the world? I confess in setting them down, that I am much astonished to think of his unspeakable kindness; especially because I have mentioned no vain speculations or dreams of man's brain which vanish in the air, but undoubted truths out of the word of God, and found true by experience of many good Christians: so that we may worthily be provoked to seek a part therein amongst them. And yet so much the greater they are, and better to be accounted of, inasmuch as the longer they be enjoyed, the more fruit and comfort they bring to him that hath his part in

them. And when we find not this doctrine savory and sweet to us, nor the use of it in our afflictions, let us not charge and challenge the Lord for it, but consider what we have lost through unbelief.

## **CHAP. 12.**

Of the eighth privilege: Of growing in grace.

Now as it cannot be denied but that these forementioned graces are singular privileges: so (to pass the next) we are not to be ignorant of this, that whatsoever good things God's people already have and enjoy; yet God hath more in store for them, and will give more grace and greater measure of his heavenly gifts, then they before they had them, could either ask or think. And this is worthy to be considered with the former, as a further increase and higher degree of the fruits of his love, that he doth so largely and bountifully reach out his hand unto them, that thereby they may be enriched as far beyond the beginnings of their true happiness, as their beginnings were beyond their first condition before it in the judgment of all men.

For clearer proof hereof, we are to know, that he maketh them to grow in sounder understanding of his will, in more assurance of faith and strength of hope, in more patience under the cross, more moderation in the use of their lawful liberties and benefits of this life, he giveth them better rule over their hearts and affections, and that in more things then at the first, and oftner and easilier; and so over their lives and actions, their tongues, their hands, their eyes, their ears. The Lord giveth them far more enlargement in prayer, then in times past, and constantly to bestow more time in all the helps to godliness, and to scour off much rust and rubbish of the rebellious old man and their evil qualities, as they have and see greater reason why they should do so: yea, he worketh more sound comfort by the

holy Ghost, and more constant continuance thereof in them, then they were wont to be acquainted with. And (to comprehend much in few words) the whole course of their life is much better governed then it was wont to be, and the image of God more lively and clearly restored. And are not these (think we) privileges far above their expectation, and greater than they could look for?

All which the Apostle, knowing that they were dainties prepared for the Lord's beloved ones, and a great treasure, (although hidden from the world) did daily wish and pray for, that they might be given to the church of Colossa, as he showeth in these words: After that I heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and love towards all the Saints, I ceased not to pray for you, that you might be filled with all knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you might walk worthy the Lord and please him in all things, bringing forth fruit in every good work, and increasing in the acknowledging of God, strengthened with all might (according to his glorious power) unto all long suffering, and lenity of mind with joy. What have I said concerning this privilege, which the Apostle hath not fully contained in these words? And yet what people are there (being but lately turned to God as the Colossians were) which might not think, that the graces which he put them in hope of, and encouraged them to look for, were not more and far greater than they might possibly be partakers of?

Which thing may lively be seen in Moses example, if we compare the time wherein God did first call him to go to Pharaoh to bring away his people from the bondage and slavery in the which he held them in Egypt, with the days which came after, when he brought them from thence. For when he should first go, he showed great weakness to be in him; himself an unmeet person to go before a king; and the burden too great for him to go under; as by his own words may

appear when he saith: Who am I, that thou shouldest send me unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? But afterwards, how boldly did he his message unto the king, neither fearing his threats nor countenance: but rather (as it plainly appeareth) Pharaoh was sore afraid of him; as in that he confessed to him (in great anguish of heart) his sin, and desired that he would sue unto the Lord for him (acknowledging that he could much prevail with him) that his plagues might cease. Behold herein one of the greatest matters (as is the fear and face of princes:) he which was afraid to look Pharaoh in the face at the first; was afterward, through strength of faith by cleaving to the Lord's commandment and promise, able to do his message to him with exceeding courage and boldness. And if in this one grace and gift of God he so increased, (which of all other seemeth the hardest) thereby overcoming that timorousness and faint heartedness which would (if it had not been by spiritual manhood and courage expelled) have made him utterly unfit for the discharging of so weighty a duty; what doubt is there, but that in other graces of God he increased also proportionally? Which doth further confirm that which I have taken in hand to show: that is, that the Lord giveth that grace unto his beloved, from which they were most far off both in their own sight and in the judgment of others, and therefore (as I have said) more then they sometime could ask or look for.

And no other thing did our Savior Christ mean, when Nathaniel acknowledging him to be very God for that he saw a token thereof in him, he said: Nathaniel, because I said: [I saw thee under a fig tree] believest thou? Behold, thou shalt see greater things then these. For thou shalt see the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man: that is to say, thou shalt see far more clear signs of my Godhead; thou shalt see my father from heaven, upon earth to witness and testify the same in most familiar manner: so that the



light which now thou hast thereof, and the faith by means of it, and thy love to me, and the comfort which thy soul hath thereby with other graces, are in comparison nothing to that they shall be; even as a grain of mustard seed is unto a tree that hath boughs and branches. And what other thing would the Lord have us to learn but this, by these speeches, that the prodigal son desiring but to be received of his father into his house as one of his hired servants, was taken again as his natural son? And the woman of Canaan, which desired but with the whelps to be refreshed with the crumbs which fell from their masters table, had granted her, for her great faith, all that she would, even the children's dainties? Even so hath the Lord provided wonderful things for them that fear him; as it is said in the Psalm: Very glorious things are reported of thee, O thou city of God. And as it is written: Who would have said, that Sarah should give suck? And that the barren should be fruitful? So who would say, that they which had in a manner nothing, should abound in many graces? What was Joshua before he was chosen in the room of Moses his master, to be governor of such a mighty people? But after he believed him which said, Even as I have been with Moses, so will I be with thee; he found that faith, courage, wisdom, experience and near acquaintance with God, which he in no sort was like before to have been partaker of. What was there in Solomon to discharge so great a province as he entered upon in his father David's stead? But after that the Lord had granted him his wish and choice, he obtained the gracious wisdom which was marveled at throughout the world.

The Apostles themselves the first three years after they were called to follow Christ, had no great matter in them above other Christians: but after that our Savior had sent them greater measure of heavenly grace from above, who doth not see by the history of their acts, how unlike they were unto such as they had been? I do not mean, in the visible gifts of the holy Ghost which were extraordinary; but in faith,

in joy, in duties of their callings: as he told all the eleven at his departure from them: I have many things to say to you, but you cannot receive them now; yea rather, you hardly understand me: but the day is at hand, when ye shall not need to ask any questions. And Peter, after he feared God, yet was dismayed at the words of a seemly damsel: but after greater grace received, was not afraid of the mighty, no not the high priest. So were sundry of the churches: as that of Thessalonica, who for all that their beginnings were famous (as appeareth in the first epistle of Saint Paul, which he wrote to them) yet did they increase mightily, as may be seen in the second: for thus he writeth to them: We ought to give thanks to God always for you (brethren) forasmuch as your faith increaseth exceedingly, and the love of every one of you each to other, aboundeth: so that we rejoice yea we boast of you to other churches, because of your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye suffer.

And therefore from so many testimonies (which in this matter so hardly believed, have been alleged) I think I may boldly affirm: that this is another, yea and that a most worthy privilege, which the Lord granteth out unto his children (and he that is wise will regard it:) That they may grow and multiply daily in the graces of his spirit; yea, that they may excel themselves by many degrees: except we will say, that God's hand is shortened in these latter days more than in former times; or his promise untrue.

But I confess I am glad to know this privilege for mine own comfort, and to speak of it to the stirring up of many my good brethren in this cold and frozen age: that we may take some trial of ourselves, what part we have in this so great a prerogative, which we may enjoy as well as any other. And as well for their just rebuke I speak it, who think it madness for men to contend and strive to go before others in godliness, faith and the fruits thereof, (though we are commanded to

excel one another:) as also to awaken them who having made good and commendable beginnings long ago, yet have taken discouragement from making answerable proceedings, although it be written: Let thy profiting be seen of all. And I deny not, but that the devil raiseth occasions enough of fainting, sloth, deadness of spirit, of earthly mindedness, neglecting of means, &c. in such as have well begun in a Christian life: but (God be thanked) they are not least unfurnished, nor unprovided of all helps against the same, if they were acquainted with the will of God but as they might be. Such therefore as see themselves faulty and weak this way, let them learn of them which have better experience in the ways of God than themselves, and which do more cheerfully go before them: that they by their example may more soundly and constantly go forward. For why should it not be with the Lord's plants in his orchard, as it is in an husbandmans? That as grafts and plants being set in good ground do spread their branches and shoot forth their boughs apparently in a few years: so might the Lord's plants do?

Moreover, we see in all societies one cometh awke and untoward to an occupation, learning or any trade; yet in few years is able to guide others: which plainly showeth how he hath profited himself. And can anything be truly said, why he which is but a young Christian only, such an one as is a lively member of Christ, though as yet he be to be thoroughly grounded in the principles of religion; yet can anything (I say) be truly alleged, why he should not in a few years be well grown and increased himself, and able also in those matters to instruct and guide others? That as he was inexpert in the word of righteousness when he was a babe: so after experience he may be stablished?

For to what end are all those goodly things revealed in the Scriptures: How we may grow from faith to faith, and from grace to grace; and that such as are aged and well grown, should have their

inward senses of their minds exercised to discern good and evil; and that we should, whatsoever we have attained unto more than others, yet seek to increase daily more and more? To what end (I say) are such Scriptures and many other of like sort? Are they not written for our instruction and edifying? Or else, do we think that they should lie by us unknown, and we not to meddle with them? Which if we will not affirm, (as indeed no wise or well advised person will) why should we not look to thrive and prosper in our spiritual husbandry, and that with much more assurance than in the earthly (wherein yet many thousands do exceedingly increase;) and the rather, for that our gain and the blessing of God is far more certain in that, than in the other? Why (I say) should not we of the ministry first and principally; and then the several congregations and people which are taught and guided by us, not only shine as lights in the dark world, but daily more and more, as the morning light doth unto the perfect day? And to be so far beyond our first beginnings in loving and obeying that which we know, that as we were then ready and forward in a little (when we knew no more:) so we may now give occasion to many to praise God for us, whiles they see the same readiness and forwardness to continue in us, as our knowledge is increased? And as we were then careful over other for the good of their souls: so why should we not be still of the same mind, exhorting one another daily with comfort, and provoking to love and to good works, and not neglect that duty for the care of our bodies and wealth? The which I heartily wish were done but with that alacrity and cheerfulness, which I myself have seen many years ago.

But alas, how rare a thing is this to find either in the one or in the other? Which causeth this and such other worthy prerogatives of the faithful, as are spoken of in the Scripture to be in small account, seeing few examples are found of this practice. And by this it may be seen what is to be understood by growing, and what this privilege is,

in the laying forth of the which I am now occupied: namely, that a true Christian may be able to see and in truth to affirm, that he enjoyeth far better liking, greater freedom, much more ease and sweetness in serving God, and in the Christian course, then sometime he was able to do or ever looked for. That he seeth far greater light in the will and word of God, and beauty in the Godly life; and hath much more conquest over his rebellious heart in subduing the affections thereof, then ever he thought had been possible for him; which who so enjoyeth not, is unjustly deprived of so great a commodity, as beside the salvation of his soul, hath none like it upon the earth: and yet cannot be separated from that neither.

And yet as great as it is, I have showed that the Lord thinketh it neither too great nor too good for his children, but hath bequeathed it unto them, and given them free grant of it; and so they may have their part in it, although the greater the benefit is, the more strongly the devil keepeth men back from possessing it, yea even many of God's dear children themselves, whom he holdeth in the cords of sin and baits of vanity: so that thereby they lose and forgo a great part in this heavenly privilege and liberty. But how he and they do stop their proceedings in grace and Godliness, may be seen in the former treatise of the lets. Yet I cannot omit here to put them in remembrance of this one let again, that without great heed taking they shall weaken their love to their brethren through conceits and taking of pitches one against another, and that oft times without any just cause: so that they shall be much feebled thereby from duties of love, which (if it were well considered) had little need to be so, being sufficient to hinder every good enterprise, then the which their need be no greater.

But if these and such like be not their stops and stays, let not any object and say: that they desire with their hearts to be partakers of

this privilege and benefit, if they knew how: for if they were willing to be persuaded, to use those means with that free and ready heart, constantly and daily, which they sometimes are willing to do, their desire should quickly be accomplished, and they made partakers of that which they wish; and that is, always to make reckoning of that to be their chiefest treasure, To grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ: and therefore without ceasing to keep their hearts unto it, and to think there is nothing more to be regarded, nor of greater weight and necessity, then to bestow the day and the several parts of it as they are directed, and as many of them also have done sometime, that they may see themselves to go forward.

I appoint to them no new or strange way; but faithfulness and constancy in keeping of that which already hath been showed them; and the same or like direction for the daily governing of themselves, which hath already been set down to them; assuring themselves, that God will not be wanting from time to time in blessing the same, unto them. Then as the corn rooted in good ground, through the blessing of God by seasonable weather, becometh far unlike that in few months, which it was at the new coming up and appearing above the ground: so shall they by the same means daily continued reverently and in faith, become far unlike themselves, which they were at their first beginning; and they shall find (as I have said) through the same shine and dew of God's blessing, that increase, which before they never looked for.

But seeing there are many of God's deer servants, who being by the malice of the devil either altogether deprived of teaching, or seldom taught, or not so taught that they may grow; here I am enforced to bewail their estate, and mourn with them, exhorting all such, that as they see any further light and liberty then in times past: so they endeavor to go forward, though they cannot attain to that which

others may. And withal I say unto the other which may profit better, as having greater helps, that they forslow not the time, nor neglect to reap the benefit daily which thereby is offered them. For as in the glory of the kingdom of heaven the highest degree of happiness shall be enjoyed, because men shall then be wholly subject unto God, and obey him willingly in all things: so the next is, to be more subject to his will, and in more things and upon better ground; and to be better acquainted with the mind of God and his secrets, then in times past: which may make them more forward, then when they first believed.

As for them, which think there is no nearer fellowship to be enjoyed with God, while they are here on earth, then they themselves have attained unto; nor any greater measure of grace then they are partakers of: let them enjoy their opinion alone, till they be ashamed of it: let us rather hope (to the further glorifying of God) to see that to be our ordinary diet, which hath been sometimes our banqueting cheer; I mean, to be able better and better to rejoice in all things that we go about through the day, whereas sometime we could scarcely do it at any time in the day; and in nothing be discouraged whiles we have the Lord both in precept and promise to go before us. Little persuasion should need hereunto, if men's hearts were set upon this Christian course, as they are upon deceitful vanities. It is not seen with bodily eye, and therefore slender credit is given to it. It is almost unknown, what beauty and contentation the believing soul findeth in it, and therefore in small request, no not with many of the better sort: and therefore few grow up to that which they might. But O earthly peace and prosperity! (An especial occasion of this through the deceitfulness of the heart) how hast thou wounded many with thy outward and flattering look, by means whereof they cannot love that which should be their greatest glory? And of this privilege thus much.

## CHAP. 13.

Of the ninth privilege: That the believers shall persevere unto the end.

Now out of this proceedeth another as necessarily, as it self ariseth out of the former; and that is, Perseverance unto the end, and continuance in faith and repentance. For as he which groweth to excel himself in all goodness, must first of necessity make a beginning, and be rooted and well settled therein, so he which increaseth daily more and more, shall at length make a good end, proportionable at least unto his course of life. For the faithful Christian having obtained of the Lord a delight in his service, and by the same a proceeding from grace to grace; he maketh an easy way for him to perseverance, granting this unto him as another privilege: That he shall not revolt and turn aside with the workers of iniquity, but shall hold out in this holy course unto his end. This appeareth to be true by the Scripture which saith: He which hath begun this good work in his, will also finish and make an end of the same. Agreeable hereunto is that saying of our Savior: This is the Fathers will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And again: None shall take them out of my hands. Therefore if God will finish the work that he hath begun in his children, if he will keep them safe until all danger be past; that is, to the day of the resurrection; and if none shall take them out of his hands: it is manifest that all such as are grafted into Christ by faith, and who have been effectually called into the number of God's children through the preaching of the Gospel unto the sure and certain hope of eternal life, setting their



faces daily toward the same; shall be safely conducted home, and abide in the same estate unto the end.

But as great a benefit as it is, That they shall continue to the end; yet if the Lord would hide it from them, and keep them from the knowledge of it, it should be much lesser: and therefore this is further to be added, that they which know themselves to be the Lord's; may also know, that they shall be preserved and kept safe against all adversary power of the devil and his instruments, and so persevere unto the end. For although it seem to be a mystery and a secret, that the determinate will and counsel of God concerning this matter should be known; yet it is a secret unto such only as lie in darkness and in the shadow of death, which through unbelief are not able to see into it because it is a mystery: but the secret of the Lord is not hidden from his own servants, but shall in time be revealed unto them; whom because he calleth his friends, therefore he showeth them his will and mind in the most precious secrets which it is expedient for them to know. For by often hearing the doctrine of perseverance plainly preached unto them, God draweth their hearts to believe it: that as they hear the Lord will perfect the good work which he hath begun in his people, and withal do know themselves to be his people; so they hold this in persuasion, though they see not how by anything in themselves, that he will continue his favor towards them unto their end. For they which know that they shall have eternal life, must needs also know that they shall be kept by God in this present world from all power of the devil which might hinder them from it. But all believers may and ought to know, that they shall have eternal life, as Saint John teacheth: I write unto you that believe, that ye may know that ye have eternal life: therefore they may know, that they shall be kept to the end that they may also enjoy the same.

Furthermore to persuade this point more strongly to God's children, (of whom many are long held in doubting of the same) and for that it is by the church of Rome flatly denied: we ought not to doubt of this, but that as God hath been with other of his servants in all ages; so he will be with us which are his in this age, or which shall be his hereafter. And therefore as he hath given them a good end of their pilgrimage, although not without many combats and conflicts: so will he do also unto us which remain, after we have suffered a little, as the Apostle speaketh. Even as Moses, Caleb, and Joshua with others, suffered many things after they first became faithful unto the Lord; yet because he had chosen them, and had promised to be with them, therefore he also did gather them up to their fathers, and they finished their course in peace.

Besides this, all such as in whom the Lord maketh his word to take root, framing their hearts to be good and honest to receive the same into them, and so to be fit to all Christian duties; they through patience continue and hold the confidence and rejoicing of their hope unto the end, (even as the good ground yieldeth her harvest in due season:) when in the meanwhile, sundry give over, recoil and faint, who seemed for a time to be as forward as the best. And to conclude these reasons: what is he amongst the people of God, who for any long time hath had proof of God's fatherly kindness, in granting him increase of knowledge, faith, peace of conscience, and the like, but in his first entrance into the Christian course he thought it wonderfully unlike, that he should ever attain to any such measure of the gifts of God as he now enjoyeth? Nay, it seemed unto him utterly impossible. And yet being nourished up by the Lord under a good diet, and once learning to know by what helps and means he doth cause his to go forward, he hath grown up to settledness and constancy, he hath found much liberty and ease (as I may say) in the true worshipping of God: even so, it seemeth not a small matter

(doubtless) to any of God's faithful servants when they deeply consider of it, to think that they shall pass safely thorough all temptations and tribulations, especially seeing they find within themselves many wants and weaknesses, many fears and likelihoods of fainting and giving over; and do see without them, sundry discouragements, allurements, persuasions, threatening's, and both by the devil and world, many hindrances from going still forward: I say, it seemeth not an easy and small matter to them, to think, that they shall see a good end of their conflicting days; yea surely it may be truly affirmed, that they who are not troubled about this or have not been, never made any good beginning. But yet when God's children set a deep and due consideration of the mighty power of God against their own timorousness and frailty, and against the strength of the devil and world; again, when they weigh the force of God's promise, who hath warranted a good end unto them, and the many helps by which God hath provided to bring them well home; they rest quietly, cast their care upon him, and trust that he which hath said it, will also do the same.

The which persuasion when they have once fastened upon, (and the offer they think on it, the more surely they shall hold it) it is hard to say, how it reviveth and gladdeth their hearts: it is a treasure invaluable, when they once soundly know it (as they can best tell the price and value of it, who have sometimes doubted of it and have felt extreme anguish thereby:) who, if they might have been assured of it in some former fears and distress, would have preferred it before the greatest commodities.

These therefore, when they once know and believe it, receiving it with such joy as I have said, do not (as carnal men imagine they will) abuse this precious liberty to looseness and licentiousness, as not caring what they do, or how carelessly they look to themselves,

seeing they have a promise from God, that they shall persevere in his favor and in a godly life unto their end. They do not (I say) by this occasion wax slothful, worldly, idle, vain, or any other way seek to shake off the Lord's yoke, as weary of the same: (and yet I deny not, but that this doctrine is thus abused of many:) but as they know that perseverance cometh not but by daily good proceeding, so they gather strength and encouragement from thence to go forward more cheerfully; yea, they go about all duties which they know to pertain to them, and the means also which help thereto much more willingly and readily, because they are persuaded they shall not lose their labor, being assured that God hath ordained the variety of helps that they should grow thereby. And indeed so they do: for the same means being daily continued with reverence, by which they have attained to any measure of God's grace already, they become faster settled in the Christian life, and wax more sound and constant; as also more fruitful in faith, love, patience, obedience, &c. and withstand all hindrances on the contrary: and thus make an end of their life accordingly.

It must needs the less appear (I grant) how glorious the death of many good Christians is, because they do not live under the ordinary preaching of the Gospel; who, except God do work in them the more extraordinarily, must needs die with less signification of faith, patience and comfort: neither doth he grant to all a like ending of their days, nor to show the like tokens of an happy departure; neither ought we to judge of men thereby. But this is more certain and sufficient to uphold us; that of a good life cometh a good death, according to the saying of the Psalmist: Mark the end of the righteous, and ye shall see that the end of them is peace. And so it shall go well with the people of God, howsoever any of them may as a fatherly correction, and for the example of others, receive such a manner of death, as might breed question and doubt of the favor of

God and of an happy end: as the Prophet of God which came from Judah to Bethel to rebuke the idolatry of king Jeroboam, for that he was not obedient to the commandment of the Lord, but did eat bread in that place which was forbidden him; and therefore was slain by a Lion in the way. And Iosia the good king of Judah, who for his rash going out to fight with Pharaoh Nechoh king of Egypt, was slain of him. So it may please God for causes best known to him (but yet always just and most certainly for his own glory) to take away some of his good servants suddenly: and to visit some other of them with loss of their inward senses, understanding, of the use of reason, memory, &c. for such effects some kind of diseases doth work; so that, in that estate they shall speak they wot not what. In the which condition it may be, that Satan may (even as he doth in the time of sleep occupy their brain, and delude them sometime with fearful dreams, sometime with filthy and deceitful:) so (I say) he may when they are waking and whiles they walk about, draw them to that, which in good advisedness they would not for the worlds good be brought unto; namely, to lay violent hands upon themselves, by drowning, by knife, or any such like way.

Which I do not speak, as minding in the least manner to move men to think, that it is but a light and small matter to cut off unnaturally the natural life, which God as a most singular earthly benefit hath given: for as it is fearful so much as to hear it named; so all they that do it, being in perfect remembrance and knowing what they do, shall be sure to smart for it, as for committing the highest degree of murder.

But as no man blameth a young infant, nor rateth it for casting the hat or coat into the fire, as he would a child of five or six years of age; the one having sufficient discretion to know it doth evil, the other not: so it is with the two kinds of people, which may possibly deprive

themselves of life: the one knoweth what he doth, and therefore shall be sure to pay dear for it; the other doth not: and having before that pang and distraction in times past witnessed an holy and Christian heart by an unrebukable conversation, he is not to be judged according to that one action, the which he always abhorred when he had perfect and sound remembrance; and when he did it, did he knew not what.

And if we do what we can to comfort him, which against his will and through the malice and tyranny of the devil, was suddenly forced to utter some blasphemous word against the majesty of God; and think that by good right we ought to do so: how much more ought we to have a charitable judgment of him, who having ever since he first gave profession to the gospel, been well reported of the brethren and of the truth itself; hath at one time when he wanted his right and sound judgment, fallen into this heinous trespass?

And thus I having answered that which might seem to breed greatest question of the perseverance of the godly in the favor of God, (which case through God's goodness doth not fall out very oft:) I may much more boldly affirm of any other of God's children, that he will never forsake any of his: no, although he load them with some hard burden of sorrow and pain, yet will he not forget them (they being dear unto him;) neither doth he forget himself in bringing a more sore death upon any of them, but thereafter he maketh their consolations to increase also. And whereas persecution amongst all kinds of death is counted most grievous, yet it is our weak faith that driveth us to that opinion. For neither is any death more happy, then to suffer for righteousness sake: and the pain of body upon the death bed hath been found far to exceed it.

But if corrupt and slothful flesh should think it great gain to accept of life in that danger through denying Christ and renouncing the truth, we should consider, what anguish we should live in and what a hell, when we have deprived ourselves of all comfort from God, as having renounced him; and when we could not live but with those, who suppressing and persecuting godliness, must needs make our life more tedious and uncomfortable then any death: which being considered, what joy (think we) is this to a godly soul, to see that day when an end of all miseries is come? When he seeing that his departure is at hand, may say: This day is that, which is better to me then all that are past, seeing I am now going into everlasting glory?

Lastly it ought to be considered, that as the three children said: We have a God that can deliver us: but if he do not, yet we will fall into his hands, and commit ourselves unto him, as unto a faithful keeper, not being unmindful of his promise, which is: Call upon me in the time of need, and I will deliver thee: And again: When they shall draw you before rulers, for my sake, be ye not careful what ye shall say; for it shall be given you in that moment, what ye shall speak: And this which the Lord saith of his present help in our necessity, he will most certainly perform, we believing his promise, and waiting for the accomplishing and fulfilling of the same.

So that in the partaking and enjoining of all our privileges, we see, that this faith is required to be as the hand by which we should receive them, and whereby we hold and possess them and all the comfort that cometh with them: and without it, we have no part nor portion in any of them; neither those which more especially concern the life to come, as the salvation of our souls; neither this present life, as the other fruits of the spirit, which I have already spoken of; seeing the word which propoundeth these from God unto us, must be

mixed with faith: for we have not more use of the air, fire nor water, then we have of it.

Here therefore I think very meet to admonish the reader of this one thing: that seeing the devil hath no greater advantage against us in our weakness, disgrace and fear, then by setting before our eyes the terrible conceit and cogitation of persecution and cruel death thereby: therefore store and stuff thyself with strong munition, I mean, variety of those scriptures which may animate thee, and which have enabled the worthy and holy Martyrs of God to set light by the fearfullest torments; particularly these: Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell: And again: we have more with us then against us: And: Greater is he that is in us, then he that is in the world: And that in the epistle to the Corinthians: There hath no temptation taken you, but such as appertaineth to man: and God is faithful, which will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye be able, but will even give the issue with the temptation, that ye may be able to bear it. These laid together do mightily prevail (we believing withal, that he is faithful who hath promised, and calleth us hereto, who will also do the same) to quicken us to the bearing of the burden, though otherwise heavy and in itself intolerable.

Also in another sort these: The afflictions of this present life, are not worthy of the glory which shall be showed unto us: And again: Our light affliction which is but for a moment, causeth unto us a far more excellent and eternal weight of glory, while we look not on the things temporal which are seen, but on things not seen, which are eternal: Also: If we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified with him. All which duly considered, with the like, are able to make us bow to the bearing of such difficulties, as our merciful father shall see meet to try us with.



The examples of our Savior, his Apostles, and other holy martyrs, whom we count blessed which have suffered for a good conscience, have no small force to persuade us. Of our Savior it is said, when the holy Ghost wisheth Christians to run with patience the race that is set before them: Look to Jesus the author and finisher of your faith: who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider therefore him that endured such speaking against of sinners, lest ye should be wearied and faint in your minds. Of the Apostles, Paul writeth this: We are afflicted on every side, yet are we not in distress; we are persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but we perish not; always delivered to death for Jesus sake, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh: And again: Chastened, but not killed; sorrowing yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing yet possessing all things. Of the Martyrs this is said: They were tried with mocking's and scourging's yea moreover by bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were hewn asunder, they were slain with the sword, they wandered up and down in sheep skins and in goat skins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented: whom the world was not worthy of; they wandered in wildernesses, and mountains, and dens and caves of the earth. Oh how should these glorious examples, with those who suffered death joyfully in our remembrance for the gospel: I say, how should they draw our hearts, and encourage us to set light by our lives, when the Lord will require them at our hands!

And to add the fourth and last kind of persuasions, to set us forward in this work of the Lord, which is hindered in us not a little, by thinking what we forgo and leave behind us, (if we should be ready to suffer persecution for Christ's sake) as our pleasures, profits, preferments, friends: to this I answer: Besides that our Savior saith ( Whosoever forsaketh house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or

mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake and the gospels, shall receive an hundredfold now at this present, and in the world to come life everlasting:) I say, beside this, alas what a poor life is this that we lead here? Where few have any great store of pleasures and commodities if they be religious: yet, if they have, they have them with much sorrow, fear and unquietness, though they have lawfully come by them. And yet, besides the uncertainty of them and of life itself, with reproach, unkindness's, malice, ill will and disdain of our betters, the lewd tongues of our inferiors, and the repining and emulation of our equals, and the wearying's of us by all sorts, unto the which we are subject; why should there be such shrinking and going back at the hearing of persecution and death? I confess, if it were not for the communion of Saints which we have in this world with God and his church, there is nothing of any weight to move a Christian to desire to live here, especially when the Lord calleth him hence: and yet the forgoing of God's presence in this world, is recompensed largely with the enjoining of it in the life to come, which is always to be preferred before the best estate that may be here enjoyed. Oh, it is not the least piece of our misery, that we seeing what little good may be done of us here, but contrarily, how great cause of complaining we have, for that we are led by the law of our members so many ways to evil; that we be not for all this, able to say every day, Come lord Jesus, come quickly: we desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.

But to end this discourse, seeing God hath taught his children to provide for the hardest, and how they may persevere in a good course unto the end, even through great tribulations and persecutions, and much more, when they have an easier passage without them; let this be holden as the greatest of all the rest, that they have this as a singular prerogative granted them of God, and that thereby they may say in reverence and confidence: Nothing shall

separate us from God, neither life nor death, neither things present nor things to come. And let not this honor and liberty be lost, which all the goods of the world cannot redeem nor buy again. And therefore let us nourish daily the hope of this perseverance: First by keeping in us a willingness to die, as sometimes we do, and so shall we be fit to live.

Secondly, that we use oft to meditate of the vanity of all things, and of the contempt of the world, and set our minds on things heavenly; that so we may preserve and continue that liberty.

Thirdly, that we hold fast our rejoicing in Christ daily.

Fourthly, that we mortify all sin, and keep it out of love with us: which is a plucking out of the sting of sin.

Fifthly, that we inure ourselves to bear smaller afflictions, which is a part of denying ourselves: so we shall welcome and go under greater when they come, yea even death itself. And let us know, that he who endeavors not to hold fast these, is like to find any other estate harder and full of weariness.

And thus much be said of this privilege, Of the perseverance of the godly unto their end: and so of all the other which are enjoyed in this life. All which although they be of so singular price as I have declared, yet if they had not other adjoined unto them which are immortal and perpetual, and should then be enjoyed, when these temporary prerogatives shall be at an end; our lives should be but miserable, as the Apostle speaketh, when he saith: If in this life only we have hope of Christ, we are of all men the most miserable; and yet both together, unmatched.

## CHAP. 14.

Of the tenth and last privilege, enjoyed perfectly in the life to come,  
but begun here.

So that when we have had our part in all these, then cometh the greatest, and that which maketh all these great: and that is, the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore, and the glory, the unspeakable glory, which was prepared and laid up for us before the beginning of the world. And amongst all the other although this be by many degrees the chiefest, yet I confess, that for the excellency thereof, and for that I cannot see into the beauty of it, as I do somewhat into the other, whereof I have some experience: I confess (I say) that I cannot express to my contentation, my mind about the same; and do fear that in speaking of it, I shall rather make it seem less, then if I said nothing: yet somewhat, seeing this place doth so require.

This estate therefore of the faithful after this life, the scripture setteth out by earthly comparisons and similitudes, to our capacity, for that we are not able to conceive the same, if in its own nature, it were described unto us: and especially, by the resemblances of those things which we do most affect and delight in, as honor, treasure, riches, beauty, friends, pleasure, joy, inheritance and possession of our own. Behold therefore here prepared for thee (O happy Christian) a habitation, not made with hands, but everlasting in heaven: an inheritance immortal, undefiled, &c. not purchased with gold and silver, but with a far more excellent price; for what is more desired than to live with our friends? But lift up thine eyes, and see how God hath prepared for thee the company of the celestial spirits, namely, his holy angels, and elect people, to eat and drink with at his table for evermore: I mean to have fellowship with them, and to

dwell with Jesus Christ and his blessed Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, friends, kindred and acquaintance: which is the highest degree of the communion of Saints. Pleasure and joy how is it sought after? Yea, what is welcome without them? And that thou mayest know, that the Lord hath liberally provided for thee this way: know and understand, that the joy which there is possessed, is such, as it causeth a continual singing and thanksgiving.

And what honor can be greater, then to be the kings sons and daughters; yea to reign triumphantly after we have overcome death, sin, hell and the devil, the greatest enemies that ever were conquered? The like I might say of the rest. And all these privileges are so much the greater, because as their habitation itself is permanent and everlasting: so are all the treasures which are enjoyed therein, everlasting also. And therefore the precious things of the kingdom of heaven are said to be such, as no eye hath seen, no ear hath heard, neither is the heart of man able to conceive. The happiness of princes hath been enjoyed, and therefore is known what and how great it is; which proveth, that it is in no sort to be compared to this. Neither is it any marvel, seeing one day in the courts of the Lord, even in this life, is better than a thousand elsewhere, even in a princes palace: therefore, in the estate of glory after this life how much more? And yet further, this is not to be neglected, that when the wicked shall be at their wits end, and smitten with horror, weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth; even then shall the faithful enjoy this infinite variety of heavenly blessings, which (if it were possible for them to have) a dreadful fear and persuasion of losing and forgoing, would be an exceeding and intolerable torment unto them.

Besides, we that live now in this corrupt estate of the world (for it was not so in the beginning) and behold the variety of God's

creatures replenishing the world, the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, the Sun, Moon and stars furnishing the upper parts above us; the trees, corn and grass, beautifying these inferior parts of the earth beneath us: if we might have seen all these in their perfection with him which was made Lord of them, even man when he was yet without sin in the world, what a glorious habitation should it have been? And yet, but as a court-yard or entry into a kings palace should it have been, in respect of the heavenly mansion, which is the celestial Jerusalem: for this is called but his footstool, but heaven is his throne.

And therefore if the Lord did so adorn this earth, as that it is yet full of admiration to see but the prints of his glory, his power and wisdom therein; and yet it is but for a season, even a while to be a place of refreshing for us: who can think how magnificent the kingdom of heaven is, which with all the infinite commodities he hath made to be a perpetual habitation and dwelling place for all his beloved ones? And so likewise it is a high degree of prosperity, to be enlightened to see by faith but in this world the sweet life of a Christian; yet is this but a taste of heaven, and a day there, is better than a thousand elsewhere: and the prerogatives of a Christian are admirable. When Paul was wrapped into the third heaven, and had heard things that were not to be uttered; it is said, that he was lift up with the abundance of revelation: and, When Christ was but transformed, that his garments did shine as the sun, Peter was astonished: how much more then with this glory? Which in the former are but dimly represented?

As for the further describing of it by the particular kinds of pleasures and delights to the body and every part of it and every sense pertaining to it; and to the soul likewise: (which some have taken upon them to affirm and set out, the Lord having said no such thing

himself of the kinds of pleasures which are to be enjoyed there:) I leave it as a bold conjecture of man's brain: and fitter for the popish clergy to teach to their superstitious company: who as their whole form of their worshipping of God is outward, gross and carnal, with Sonnets and sounds to please the ear, and prayer-like sights to delight the eye; but that worship which is in spirit and truth, is not in use with them: so they imagine as grossly of the delights which are in heaven; that part of them are in the exceeding sweetness to the sense of smelling, marvelous pleasure to the sense of tasting, and so of handling they speak answerably. I will not (I say) wade further then I may wade safely; what the kinds and variety of pleasures are particularly which the righteous are partakers of, the Lord hath not revealed unto me, and therefore I am not ashamed to say, I know not: It is enough, that I am sure they are so great and many, that they cannot be once thought of according to their worthiness, no not of the wisest, who can see furthest and enter most deeply into matters.

Only this I will say, and with this I will end: That the Lord shall there wipe away every tear from the eyes of his children; and they which sowed in tears before here on earth, shall there reap in joy; death shall no more reign, neither shall there be any more lamentation, nor crying, nor sorrow: and for the glory, beauty, pleasure and eternity which shall be found there, it is compared unto a goodly city; whose shining is like unto a stone, most precious as a Jasper stone, clear as crystal, &c. And after the soul in paradise shall in her kind have enjoyed the pleasures there, then shall the body (for enjoining the fullness thereof) be adjoined to it, and made like to the glorious body of Jesus Christ: and be glorious itself also. The use is comfort, and such a waiting for the coming of the son of God for our last and full deliverance, that we may well testify, that in these our houses of clay we are but strangers. So that if we lay this privilege with the rest which I have mentioned in this treatise, (all which are, and properly

belong to the true believers) who can deny but that their part and portion is great? But oh, that it were so accounted of, even among such; and yet when I, or any have said what we can, we have said but a little: for it is far greater then we can set it out to be. For as the Queen of Sheba said to Solomon when she had heard his wisdom: It was a true word that I heard in mine own land of thine estate and wisdom; howbeit I believed not this report, till I came and had seen it with mine eyes: but loe, the one half was not told me; for thou hast more wisdom and prosperity, then I have heard by report: So it may be said by God's people (who have already in heaven a taste of the glory of the kingdom:) It was a true report which we heard by the mouth of his preachers, concerning the tidings of salvation and their other prerogatives; yet the one half of our prosperity and happiness was not declared and made known: for we have greater then was reported in their message. And if they find it so great in heaven, can the taste thereof choose but be sweet and great which we have here on earth? Even as Balaam by the spirit of God, prophesied of his people the Israelites, when he looked upon them dwelling according to their tribes: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob; and thy habitations, O Israel? As the valleys are they stretched forth, and as gardens by the rivers side, &c.

And as all these privileges are great, and we have good proof that God hath given his dear children liberty to enjoy them: so this further commends their happy condition, that they may know that all these belong to them, and they have the word of God among them, and they may also approve of, embrace, and delight in the same; and be able to see thereby, how they are made partakers of them all by faith, and how thereby they have most sweet communion with him and with Christ by his spirit, (which the world cannot have) and most heavenly comfort and peace thereby; and having learned experience for the time to come, may get wisdom to carry themselves in every



estate and condition after the best manner of Christians: all this (I say) they have given them of God.

And concerning the effectual knowing of the will of God out of his word, to believe all the forementioned privileges, that it is a peculiar gift of God to his elect, and that no other (no, not the greatest and most judicial clerks and divines) have it; that saying of our Savior, is a plain and clear proof to his disciples: To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but unto others not; that the prophecy of Isaiah may be fulfilled, In hearing they shall hear and not understand, and seeing they shall see and not perceive; lest they should turn and I should save them. Whereby we may understand, that it is a singular prerogative to God's children to have the effectual knowledge of the word of God, whereby they may see their liberties: which others cannot have.

And therefore the Lord saith in Ezekiel, that he will take away from his children their old hearts and give them new; and write his law in them, that they may see the excellent things and wonderful which are contained therein: which others do not. So that, although the unbelievers and unregenerate may have knowledge in the letter; yet are they not led after it by the spirit which is the life of it. For what will not hope of promotion, living and credit do, even with natural men, in drawing them to take pains to seek for knowledge; as experience in all ages hath and doth teach? When yet, for any great matter of sound practice and comfort that many of them have by the scriptures besides, it is not worth the speaking of. For when by study and learning they have gotten the wealth and glory of this world, they have that which they sought: and as for the scriptures and the power of godliness, though they have a show of it, their hearts tell them, that they are not the matters which take them up in the delight of them, for they hate to be reformed by them; neither are they so

precious in their eyes, as that which they have gotten by them, though it be but base and temporary.

Whereas the word of God that revealeth his will about all these, is more sweet to his servants, then the honey comb; yea, all the pleasures of the world are not in their account to be compared to the wisdom thereof: but that which is said of the man of God, That he had more pleasure in the word of god then in all manner of riches, and that they were the joy of his heart, his matter of song and his companions to talk and solace himself with; it is far from them. Therefore when the blessed of the Lord are set forth in the scriptures, to delight in the law of God: the wicked on the contrary, are described to speak thus: Depart from us (O Lord); we desire not, nor are delighted in the knowledge of thy ways.

And is not this a royal gift then, that whereas men's hearts naturally can take no pleasure in the heavenly Manna of God's word, but soon loath and wax weary of it; that God's people who know the price of it, may make the same their song, their joy and their delight: that so they may draw out of it all good things as they have opportunity? Which seeing others cannot do, therefore they seek vain delights to pleasure in, and that which ministereth found delight indeed, they can in their greatest need and heaviness have no benefit by it.

And through this knowledge and delight that they have in the scriptures, which certify them of all these heavenly prerogatives, they get experience in themselves of the things which they learn therein, what is the happiest estate of life that here can be enjoyed, even that, which hath the promises of this life and of that which is to come. They grow wise in observing, that God verifieth indeed all that he hath spoken in his word, and not a iota thereof doth fail; and therefore they become more resolute every day against all evil and

sin, because they see that God will be revenged upon every evil way; and that it is certain, if they sin as others do, he smiteth: and they grow to see, that he keepeth promise towards his, who rest on him, even in their greatest straits. Which how great a benefit it is, may be gathered by this, that it bringeth most near communion with God by his spirit, which worketh in them (and which the world cannot receive) as our Savior saith: He that loveth me, shall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will show myself unto him: He that keepeth my word, as he shall be loved of my father, so we will come to him, and abide with him: whereby he meaneth, that he will make known his mind and will to them as familiarly, as they which use to converse one with another, and eat and drink together: for the which cause also he calleth them his friends, which do the things which he commandeth them, as to whom he will open even his secret, as men use to do to their friends, and not to servants. For he loveth Zion (his militant church which he hath chosen, and will dwell there and delight in her) more than all the habitations of Jacob, that is, then all other beside it.

And what fruit this near communion with God doth bring, which his faithful servants have offered them, it may easily be conjectured; because, as Solomon saith: The heart of a friend resteth in his friend; and a friend is nearer than a brother: and if the perfection of love be joy, there must needs be great joy to God's faithful people, when they are so dear to the Lord and he beloved of them so entirely. Therefore, as God giveth to his, many comforts, and that also he doth many ways, and in many respects, through the hope of eternal life, through true prayer, and by a good conscience (as hath been said:) so, in that they know his will and have proof of his familiarity with them, (as it pleaseth him to call it) their joy is yet more increased, especially after a longer continued acquaintance with the Lord in his word. And what is happiness (such I mean as in this present life may be enjoyed) if

this be not; namely, to partake all these with him? Thus to go in and out before the Lord, and to have him thus the staff of our comfort in all estates? Which maketh ready to die and fit to live, and giveth greater gain in both, then in any other condition or course can be found and enjoyed: yea this maketh the enjoyers of it happy here, and certain, that afterwards they shall be happy forever; and though Satan doth much quail this by occasion of troubles and our frailties, yet it is certain, that it shall be recovered again.

This in few words is that which I wish the true Christian reader to meditate on and consider, which all God's people have so great need to enjoy and partake by faith, as it must needs grieve all that do understand and love the excellency of it, to see so many to be void thereof, to whom yet the Lord hath graciously and freely bequeathed it. And I pray God in most fervent manner, to enlarge the hearts of all his good servants, that seeing many mourn in Zion, and are holden down with sundry and sore afflictions till they faint again, (as though there were no comfort to be found for them, to the easing of their heavy hearts) that they may consider what the Lord hath provided for the easing of them, even this: to believe, that all the forementioned privileges belong unto them: that though their sorrows be many and great, yet they may not drive them from hope in God, but send them more earnestly to groan to him by prayer, that they may receive and take these things to their comfort, which he for that very cause hath committed to writing; that those his children which are brought low, and into distress, and almost to utter despair, may lift up their heads, and rejoice for so great hope of redemption and deliverance at hand coming towards them.

And this will recompense, abundantly all the labor that hath been taken, and need no more be lost when it is once enjoyed. And therefore if the believers may know by God's word, that they have a

part in all the forementioned prerogatives, and therefore delight in his word which bringeth such tidings to them; if they may thereby be made acquainted with that manner of conversation which pleaseth God best, and maketh most for their own comfort, and by his spirit may have communion with him (which the world cannot have:) I conclude (I say) that the believers have great prerogatives bequeathed them, and that the privileges which God hath granted out unto his beloved, are most precious, and worthy all labor and travel to be come by.

And that I say no more of this, it is no hard matter to conceive, what sweet consolation a believing heart enjoyeth which hath experience of this: for he believing the promises of these things, from day today, and having most sweet peace of conscience with confidence, as a fruit of believing them already, how great must his comfort needs be, which ariseth from both, and especially for the hope which he hath of that which is yet to come?

Oh that all who fear God did believe this, as they may boldly and ought confidently to do, that they might enrich themselves by having their part in it from time to time. So that nothing is more to be lamented in the world then this: that God having called men to be partakers of so excellent privileges, and appointed for them such variety of blessings, (whereof I have mentioned but some part) that they should be so ignorant, as not to desire to know them; so careless as to reject them; so obstinate as to tread them under foot: and so to lead a life (I may truly say) full of misery for want of them.

But whiles I set down this, me thinks I hear some objecting thus: How can we be persuaded that God hath provided this liberty for his in this world, when both Scripture calleth our life here (when we be in greatest prosperity) a wandering up and down heavily, as in a

pilgrimage or wilderness? And a sowing in tears, that is to say, full of grief? And Christ telleth his, that in the world they shall find tribulation, and that by many afflictions and persecutions we must enter into his kingdom? And experience also teacheth, that these things are even so? To the which I answer, affirming all that is said to be most true: and therefore seeing our troubles and sorrows are many and great, through the devils malice, whiles we seek to keep ourselves unstained in this wretched world, we have the more need of the greater comfort: neither were it possible for any godly man to go through them, if he were not fully resolved, that God is with him to help him, and comfort his soul many ways, and namely in this, wherein he feeleth his need greatest. And therefore these afflictions which our gracious God hath appointed and promised to bring us through, are a most sure proof of this which I say: namely, that he hath given most precious promises and prerogatives to us, by the which only we can be able to go under them. For all of us must needs faint, if we did not confidently believe, that he setteth our hearts in most sound joy and gladness; partly by the testimony of a good conscience, which is a continual feast, and an experience of his fatherly love towards us; and partly through the daily success and blessing which we look for from him, the hope whereof maketh us not ashamed.

Therefore seeing God of his unspeakable love hath bequeathed to his children so large a portion, even a taste of the heavenly joys in this life, which maketh his chastisements sweet, and the yoke of his commandments easy unto them, and all difficulties to be overcome of them, and poureth such great peace and comfort into their hearts that love him, and this from day today, restraining them of it at no time (except it be more expedient for them to want it:) what shall I say more, but bewail that so few find it; and pray God to enlarge their hearts, that they may be able to comprehend, and so enjoy it, and to

give all praise to his majesty, who hath thought no heavenly comfort too good for his, even in this world, which is a vale of misery?

And as for such as think, that it is weak rejoicing, that is and may be accompanied with so many afflictions, as our life is subject to: they must know, that such corrections are seen by our heavenly father to be meet for us, and to keep us from vain and deceitful rejoicings; and that these fatherly chastisements do not take away this heavenly comfort from us, but they rather cause it to be seen a greater benefit, then without them we could easily be able to perceive.

Others object thus: Are there so many commodities in the Christian life? How cometh it to pass then, that they show it not forth, and that the godly of all sorts, poor and rich, one and other, do not let their light so shine among men, that they may cause them by seeing such admirable things in them as are not to be found commonly in the world beside, to ask and haste after them? For where are they (say these Objectors) which have so much grace appearing in them above other men? In their dealings we find it not: in their lives we see it not: neither are any parts that we behold in them such, as deserve so great commendation. To whom I answer, that all these things are true, which have been said of the great privileges and prerogatives of the people of God, and much more according to that which is written in the Psalm: Wonderful things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God: but yet not so easily descried nor perceived in the persons who enjoy them; and that for these causes:

First, seeing their most precious gifts are spiritual and inward (according to that which is written; The kings daughter is all glorious within ) and therefore not easily seen and beheld of such as have but outward and bodily eyes: their comeliness and beauty is like the curtains of the tabernacle, the outward and upper coverings whereof

were of goats hair, rams skins, and badgers; but the inward were of fine twined linen, blue silk, purple and scarlet, with the most exquisite embroidering of the Cherubims upon them: So is the outward estate of God's servants in this world, ill-favored and deformed in the eyes of men; but inwardly, beautiful as the lily, and sweet and pleasant as the rose. Their graces therefore which God hath given them, as faith, hope, confidence, a pure heart, a good conscience, a well governing of themselves; and with these, meekness, patience, mercifulness, love, &c. being not perceived of them who neither know them, nor have them, nor love them: what marvel is it, though they ask for that in them, which yet is before their eyes, (as the soldiers that sought Christ even when they spake to him) and though they say, They behold no such grace in them; which they cannot discern? The same may be said of the inward comfort and joy in the holy Ghost, which is more worth than the world.

The second cause why these Objectors see nothing worthy the following in a manner, or commendable in them, is: because the gifts of God which appear outwardly in their lives, do the more provoke them to wrath and rage, because they see their course is not like their own, but contrary unto it: for they think themselves disgraced by them, seeing they walk not after the same excess of riot that they themselves do; and therefore speak they evil of them. Their innocence and harmless living in the world, and that they will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rebuke them rather, and their Christian carrying of themselves in their ways with moderation, wisdom and constancy; is charged to be hypocrisy, preciseness, and new-fangled singularity.

Furthermore, the comfort which they have in their lives, being rather felt in their own hearts than seen of strangers, and their reproach in



the world great, and their condition counted unfortunate: how can the happiness of them be known, as I have said, although it be no less, yea rather far greater, than I have set it down to be? No, no, they must have eyes as clear as crystal, who can see and behold this.

And that I may leave no doubt in any man's mind about this matter, I must desire them to think, that my meaning is not, that God's children, for all the privileges wherewith God honoreth them, both here, and especially will do in the life to come, are therefore without their several infirmities and blots also, (some of them) unto the which the rest (through their own corruption yet remaining in them, and the devils malice) are subject: which (though they debar them not of the forenamed prerogatives, seeing they are willingly brought to repent of them) is one great cause, why these objectors see so little in the godly life, as either to commend it, or to be themselves encouraged to embrace it. But yet while these mark not these things, but only behold the slips and blemishes in the men themselves, though in some more than other, and do not believe nor regard the doctrine of the Scripture, which teacheth the truth more soundly than it can be seen in the holiest persons and perfectest patterns; therefore they grow to these absurdities. And yet when their infirmities appear, and afflictions take hold of them, God seeing it expedient that it be so for a season; even then is their estate more to be desired, than the other in their greatest flourishing. For they are beloved of the Lord yet still for all that, and most dear unto him, as it is written: I am black, ye daughters of Jerusalem, yet comely, &c. And of their falls and infirmities, I say, that therefore they departed from the good and perfect way for a moment, that they might thereby see and bewail their vileness, and so return again to stand more constantly after. Yet this watch-word I would give to many which are of good hope, that diverse gross and rank corruptions do so broadly appear and so mightily prevail in sundry (as frowardness,

uncharitableness, conceitedness, rash judgments, breach of promise, and other heat and intemperancy of heart, &c.) to the offense of many, that they do exceedingly abate the beauty and glory of their profession. And it must needs be confessed and granted, that few Christians are as they might and ought to be: but goodness is too sparing, and grace is too sore dimmed and darkened in most, even of the best and forwardest: and few carry themselves as they might and ought to do in their course, by giving good example. And this maketh the Gospel to be less honored and embraced of many: whereas if it were a more common thing, that the well-willers of the Gospel were more faithful, wise, watchful, loving, harmless, fruitful, &c. it would cut and wound the hearts and consciences of the bad, and also encourage many of the weaker sort unto their duties. But yet shall the lives of them be glorious before God, and shining lights to such as can see and discern; whiles they that carpe at them, and seek to disgrace them, shall be as the mists and clouds, that shine not but hinder the light rather. And whereas it may be said, that some of them have excellent gifts of God in them: yet the truth is, where sanctification, even the salt of grace, is not to season them, they are but as a pleasant and beautiful flower growing on a dunghill; and (as Solomon saith) like a ring in a swine's snout. And thus much of the privileges of the true believers.

The end of the sixth Treatise.

## **THE SEVENTH TREATISE,**

OF THE OBJECTIONS AND CAVILS WHICH MAY BE BROUGHT  
AGAINST THE DOCTRINE BEFORE SET DOWN; AND AN  
ANSWER TO THEM.

**CHAP. 1.**

Of the sum and order of this Treatise.

Now that I have set down the sum of the matter which I took in hand, and have showed how it behooveth the people of God to be directed and guided daily unto the Christian life, and what impediments are in the way to hinder from it, and privileges to encourage to it: I will now in the next and last place, as I appointed in the entrance, meet with the objections and cavils which may arise from thence: that all the Lord's inheritance may walk after that course more resolutely and boldly; especially when such objections as may trouble them, shall appear to be but weak and vain. As I nothing doubt, but whatsoever show of reason may come in the way against it, shall be seen to be but the froth of man's brain, and carnal. And I likewise hope, that such as shall be acquainted with the doctrine before set down, shall not only be encouraged by these answers to practice it, but also enabled and persuaded to continue therein till more light be given them for the well governing of themselves, and that in a more perfect manner than I can set down: in the mean season, that this which I here have propounded, may help to direct the common sort of Christian people, as the godly learned have been taught of God to direct themselves. For who knoweth not this, that even many of God's dear children do and have through ignorance and for want of direction, very dimly seen into the beauty of a godly life, and uncomfortably gone about it, and have made a mere toile of the service of God, which should be the greatest

pleasure? Therefore as it is not to be doubted, but that numbers will rebel against the doctrine which rangeth them within holy compass, and will refuse to be subject to it; and that they which do so, will frame their judgment to their practice, to excuse and defend that to be good which they do; and besides, there is no doubt, but that questions will arise in the weak believers about it to trouble them: I will therefore (as I said) in this Treatise set myself against such carnal reasonings, answering the cavils and quarrels which they shall raise and bring for the defense of their evil lives against the former doctrine; and then remove the objections which weak (but yet teachable) Christians would or ought to propound for their satisfying, before I end.

And I will do it in this manner: First, to answer them who object, that there is no need of any daily directing of us, as long as we have the Scriptures; and therefore, neither this which is before set down by me, nor any other, is of any use, or to any purpose: this I will answer in the next chapter. Then I will show the objections and cavils of them, who say, that neither this nor any other like it, can be observed, that is, daily; and set down their reasons; and show what great inconveniences they think would follow: and to these I will answer in the three next chapters. After both, I will mention sundry of the particular doubts, which are like to rise in the minds of such as are teachable and well-disposed Christians, and arm them against the same; to the tenth chapter. And last of all, I will shut up this Treatise and the whole book: exhorting all the faithful to make use of it; and the unreformed, to repentance.

## **CHAP. 2.**

Of the first objection: That their needs no direction daily besides  
God's word; and therefore this is needless.

And first, if any do marvel why I write any direction at all as though God had not set down in the scripture a way for us all to walk in: to this I answer, That if that were a good reason why no help for men's weakness should be set forth in writing, because it is the same which is in the scripture; then it should follow with as great reason, that nothing should be preached, because all that which is preached (if we preach in the name and by the authority of God) is out of the scripture. But seeing there can be no doubt made of that, and therefore that both preaching and writing are singular gifts of God for the building up of his church; and that all helps are not enough to hold us on still in our Christian course: therefore all men see that this doubt is soon answered, and will grant, that it is necessary to have daily direction for our lives drawn out of the scriptures, though we have them extant among us. This being so, I will proceed to show the cause, why I have taken in hand any such thing in this book: and will answer particular questions and objections afterwards. I have considered, being conversant among the people, of whom, many have received the gospel gladly, what great wants and infirmities are among them: and as diverse of them conceive and understand that which is taught them with much ado; so they as hardly keep it in memory, and therefore make the less use of it. So that, although all things necessary to salvation and godliness, be taught one time or other, where an ordinary ministry is; yet, as I have good proof, it must be a very long time to bring the most part, even of the forwarder sort, to be able to guide themselves, and to lay together in one sum those things, which have been taught them at many times: I did therefore endeavor myself, to lay before them a sum of that in one view, which they have been learning many years: that they

having the same brought into some easy and familiar kind of order, may through the blessing of God find help and ease by it.

And besides, I have known many of great forwardness and ready to receive any profitable lessons, (even as the Thessalonians were) who having long wandered in sorrowfulness of heart, and found much untowardness in their life, have complained bitterly; wishing most willingly, that they might have found some direction to lead them into their way, and to hold them constantly in the same. And this they have done, for that they were so soon unsettled and waxed loose hearted in a small time and short space, although a little before they felt themselves in some good case, even ready and willing to serve God: which men being directed how to keep constant, shall not a little be eased. And if you will say, They may hear their preachers and so learn to stay themselves: who doth not know, that they must proceed in their teaching as occasion is offered by their text; which doth not fall out commonly such or in such manner to be handled, that it satisfieth those which be in this case, being perhaps but touched briefly? And though it do somewhat comfort them which they hear, yet it abideth not by them, through forgetfulness and other occasions; and yet there are very many that never hear any such thing taught them at all, or to very small purpose: and therefore if such may have somewhat lying by them, to guide them in that their so great necessity, shall it not be (think we) great help and contentment to them?

Now if you ask, why they do not open their case and make their grief known to their teachers: I say, some of them are ashamed, some are afraid to show their estate to others, the devil holding them in ignorance and distrust. Again, many of their ministers, to whom they may have access, either for want of knowledge, or of experience, or both, are not able; and others of ill conscience are not willing to

resolve them, nor stay their minds, but wound and vex them with mocks and discouragements rather, (as the watchmen which Solomon speaketh of (calling them fools for meddling with the scriptures: and this is the comfort which they find at their hands. These things when I have weighed and thought upon, what light, ease of heart, and consolation many of God's dear servants have been deprived off for want of direction, and how many of them have walked heavily and with hanging down of the head; and all because they have seen their frailty great, felt their wants many and grievous, and utterly unable, by that which they had learned, to carry forward themselves in their Christian course by reason of their so many discouragements, and the same not provided against: I wished most earnestly that some such thing might come forth, as might settle men more firmly in a Christian estate, that such as are willing, may be able also to direct themselves in their daily carriage: which how greatly it may benefit them that have a mind to please God, and how much more fit it may make them to profit by the daily teaching which is among them, (that I say nothing what good it may do others) it is no hard thing to judge and determine.

Besides this, such as find no want of it, because they know not whether there be any easier way to guide them, then they already understand, there is no doubt but many of them, if there were any extant, would keep a more sound course in their lives then now they do, having (I speak of many of them) none other help then their public teaching, which in many places is both seldom and slight.

And to speak plainly, (if it be expedient to speak thus: for the love of God's people constraineth me) I have myself languished long, (though not without Christ in the world, and therefore not altogether without flitting comfort) sometimes to see such unsettledness in my life, such uncertainty in my ways, so oft proposing greater

proceeding and more constancy in that which is good, more exercise of my faith in prayer, oftner rejoicing in the Lord for the privileges which he hath granted to us. Many years these and such like have been my desire, and longed after: but many alterations, disappointments, unsettling's of mind have come, with no small heaviness accompanying the same; until woeful experience drove me to tie up mine affections shorter, and for better stay of myself, to draw somewhat according to my small knowledge and experience out of my reading, to be a more certain manner of direction for me through the day and week, which I may aim at: and if not so full and perfect, as it might be, and by some other might have been penned; at the least, such it is as God's word doth lay out unto us, and such as if men were as fit to profit by it, as it is fit to do them good, it should not be as it is with many well-disposed Christians. By the which whatsoever I have attained unto, I will not say, but I dare warrant the careful and faithful observer of it (the Lord being true of his word, who blesseth the means, which are used in simplicity) that his labor in the practice of it, shall be plentifully recompensed, yea his gain by many degrees shall be greater than his travel. This I say now, seeing by the importunity of many I have made it common to others which I collected and gathered for mine own use: and therefore I may be bold also to say, that whiles men do serve God with some care, and being called home to repentance, do desire to set forth his glory, yet when they shall not propound to themselves for this purpose, some certain course daily to walk in, but go on uncertainly, that is, one day giving themselves carefully to good duties, but another day neglecting them, and following the occasions thereof rather than resolutely armed against the same; it both causeth great distraction and unsettledness in them, though otherwise good men, and bringeth much barrenness of heart, giveth more strength to their corruption and more advantage to the adversary, and therewithal depriveth them of much communion with the Lord and comfort



thereby, and causeth that the godly life is not found and enjoyed of them in many points as it might be.

I have spoken much of the privileges of a godly life, though no tongue of Angels can sufficiently set out the same: yet many (no doubt) of good hope have not found it so, for that they have had but weak helps to set them forward, in having their part in them, but are ignorant rather of the variety of the good things, which God hath prepared for them that love him, and therefore their faith and comfort are weak, when yet their discouragements and hindrances have been strong and many. These at some time have felt the favor of God shed into their hearts, that they might not turn from him altogether: but if they have not attained to some good order and settled course to direct themselves by, they must needs taste the more of the corruption of the world, be the more in subjection to their rebellious affections, and therefore the less feel the benefit of a Godly life.

For from whence are there so many heaviness's, complaints of unsettledness, inconstancy, yea and halting with God, but from hence in great part, that they do quench the work of God's spirit in themselves, and cannot tell how to quicken up themselves again, nor to arise when they are fallen, and to return when they are gone out of the way, nor to guide themselves from one duty to another?

I know that it is not the virtue, nor the power of outward means using, nor of any direction that can bring our lives in frame: but yet for all that, when they are reverently and confidently used, God hath promised that it shall not be in vain, but they shall avail much to our benefit. What meant the Lord Jesus else, to charge us to watch and pray, to hear and read? And the Apostle also, in the name of God to exhort us, whiles we are in this warfare of the world to have always our complete and full armor, and not to walk naked and hang that

upon the wall, but that we should daily gird it unto us, and suffer no day to pass in the which we should walk without it? And to what other end tendeth this direction, which I am now occupied about? For if every day and oft in the day we look not carefully that we be armed with it, let us look for no other from him who is our professed enemy, (& as able to hurt us, as willing and watching for it) let us look for no other (I say) but to be dangerously foiled, as many even of the better sort are, though some of them through spiritual slumber feel it not, neither perceive it in a long time, till it please God to awake them.

But to return to persuade, that it is necessary that God's people should be daily holden within holy bounds: is it not preposterous and lamentable that we can say, that where no order is in anything that is taken in hand, there is confusion and danger; and yet, although there be none taken for the daily governing of a Christian man's life out of God's word, which without daily direction is soonest out of order; yet there we suspect not, neither fear any confusion and danger? The husbandman cannot yield his rent, nor reap his yearly harvest without his daily and continued labor: neither can the captain maintain war against his enemy except he renew his band, and cause daily attendance to be given by the same, and necessary provision to be in a readiness; and so I may say of the rest. In like manner, the Christian cannot look to continue faithful unto the end, if he set not himself of purpose to continue daily his diligence in resisting his sin, and if he gather not daily strength, by the continuance of some good means against the evils thereof. Insomuch, that if a man had all the knowledge that many men have, and should be ignorant of no necessary point of duty: yet if he should not with a well ordered mind, provide and carefully look for the right use of his knowledge every day, as he shall have occasion to practice it; he might quickly be too far gone out of the way in some gross dishonoring of God:

which though it do not prick and wound them by and by, yet a time will come, when he shall wish he had borne the yoke of Christ, and kept compass; for the end of a thing is not like the beginning.

If any should think me unadvised to call in this earnest manner, for daily directing of men privately, as though I set little by, or made small account of the helps which they have in public assemblies; I have said before, that I prefer these before the other: yet it may please them to understand, that besides the benefit of them, which is very great and singular, every man shall find it more than necessary, that they be not idle nor unprofitable at home about the well governing of themselves in the several and manifold affairs of the day; and yet shall not this be any derogating from the other, but the fruit of it, even as necessary for the soul, as to have a daily good diet and ordinary for the body although it have a feast once in the week. This I have spoken generally hitherto, to persuade many that fear God, (and yet for want of knowledge do serve God very uncertainly, and see not therefore the excellency and price of the estate that he hath called them unto) that he hath not left us so desolate and stranger-like from him here on earth, that we should but seldom think of or hear from him; but should have daily recourse to him, and throughout the day be with him, and not as the wandering man, who hath lost his way, so to be at any time out of his government. And that it is not only his pleasure, but also his commandment, that we should so live in the world, and so have to do in it, that yet all the day long (as our frailty doth permit) we may have our meditation on him, and on our happiness in conversing and walking still with him.

If this state be thought too precise by some; let them consider the examples of those who are commended in the Scriptures for their constant walking with God: how they were taken up with the love of him, and possessed of faith, &c. for so the Apostle speaketh of the

Thessalonians; that they abounded in these, and were ready to do whatsoever he commanded them: and David prayed that he might not wander from God's commandments. What is here commended in them, but that which these mislike and speak against at this day in us, who labor for some measure of it? Is that ill in us, which was good in them? There want no proofs nor examples to teach what we should do in this behalf; but the flesh rocketh asleep even many good Christians. But whatsoever these Objectors allege, who have not tasted of these dainties, let us be most glad to hear, and more glad to learn; that the beloved of the Lord may dwell in safety under his protection all the day long. And if we have not known so much, as that God hath left us such direction to enjoy his presence in some continual manner amongst us: then let us now learn, and believe it, that we may reap fruit of it accordingly; and not be so hailed this way and that way in the world with cares and vexations, and snared and allured with earthly pleasures and delights; neither unsettled so with unreasonable and ungodly persons, that we can hardly once in the day, (yea, sometime through the week) have liberty and ability, so much as one quarter of an hour to solace ourselves with holy meditation and remembrance of heavenly things: for thus it hath been with many of the dear servants of God, (of such slavery they have been holden under) who yet I doubt not but they shall without neglecting any necessary business, shake off much needless tediousness in their lives, and see their estate much altered to the contrary liberty and holy rejoicing, if they will duly regard what God hath said of this daily keeping of a good course, and not what carnal Objectors say, to discourage them. And thus much of the first objection.

### **CHAP. 3.**

Of answering this objection: That no such direction can be observed daily.

But I having thus showed the cause why I took this in hand, and answered them, who may think that no direction for a Christian through the day is of necessity to be imposed upon him: now I will proceed to satisfy the reasonable about this particular direction, or the like in effect, by answering such objections as may be brought against the same. Some perhaps will object and say: It cannot be daily observed of any man, neither have they heard, that good men in other ages have been given to any such speculative life, except the monks and friers, and other of that rabble: they will not deny but it is good, sometime to give ourselves to prayer and other good exercises; but every day to do it, and to be tied unto them and to other duties before mentioned, were a toile intolerable which no man can like of, and a taking away of all delight from our lives. Again, they say: What should become of men's labor and business in the world? How should it go forward? Also they say: It were a strange world to see men live now after such a sort, and a bringing in of Monkery again.

These and such like objections although they proceed from very evil men, and are uttered of them with a scoffing spirit; yet for want of knowledge and due consideration, they may be at the first, the thoughts of many simple well-meaning men: for whose cause I will answer them, because I would be loath to leave such in any doubts, which might trouble and hinder them. But they who object thus, might more justly have alleged other reasons, why they think it so hard to keep any such daily direction: that is to say, partly their own ignorance, unacquaintedness with this course, and unableness: and partly the taunts, mocks and other discouragements, which profane and ungodly men would pursue them with, who should walk so unlike other men of the world, by the practicing hereof. First

therefore I will answer their doubt in that they think it impossible: and then their reasons why they think it cannot be without great inconvenience. If it were impossible to bring ourselves to such a course, (for here is no perfection to be dreamed of by me, but a holy directing of ourselves daily towards the kingdom of heaven) why would the prophet David have said: Blessed is the man that exerciseth himself and meditateth in God's law day and night? Also why would he have said it of himself, That all the day long he was considering it in his mind, that is to say, meditating on it? It is manifest (whatsoever particular manner or order he used herein) that he did tie himself daily to this course, that is to say, to see that he walked homeward; that he might not be carried aside, or out of the way, either with the deceitful enticements of this world, or any discouragements: but much hath been said in the former treatises to this purpose.

And such examples this present age of ours (God be praised) doth afford, (he vouchsafe to multiply the number of them, for one an hundred) who do so pass through the affairs of this world, that the Christian life is unto then not in word (as it is with many which deceive themselves) but indeed and sensible account, daily their chief treasure. And all that I require is no more, but that faith and godliness may be continued and increased in the believers: and that they provide (for the same purpose) that though the malice of the devil doth lay many lets in their way, yet that they bridle and bring under their corruptions, to the maintaining of a pure heart, a good conscience and unfeigned faith which worketh by love, to the praise of God, and their own comfort. The which will not be brought to pass through security and negligence, but whiles they give all possible diligence hereunto, and set themselves in some good order and daily direction for the preserving of the same. So that if there be any before others in this practice, who by experience have found how

mightily God hath blessed them in this estate, (who is as ready to do the same to the rest that desire it) and have proved that it is possible, yea and easy (through God who maketh it so) to pass the day in well doing with peace (or when it is worst with them, to be free from evil for the most part) rather than wearisomely and unwillingly (as the most do:) let such be patterns and examples to those which are not so forward. Let one learn of another in meekness of spirit, that which he hath not as yet attained unto: and not hold this opinion, That none can do more than they themselves do, nor go beyond them; who yet have scarcely at all, or very slightly gone about this practice, themselves.

There is no reason in it, that such as serve God in the day (as it falleth out at a venture) without any certain purpose of care, or using the means for the quickening of their faith, should either find the godly life so easy, or be able to judge of the best way to it, as they who have painfully traveled in it, and spent much time about it. For they must be able to report what repulses they have had, and how they have recovered their strength again: what temptations, and how they have resisted them: what hindrances and discouragements whereby they have been long held back, and how they have overcome them. They must be able to say what hardness is in the godly life, and how it is made easy: how flitting and soon vanishing our faith is, and how it is strengthened and confirmed: what comfort and unspeakable peace God giveth his, to encourage them to go forward constantly: They must have good proof of their many infirmities, and how they send them the more earnestly to God in their prayers, to strengthen them against the same: to be short, they must be acquainted with the subtle and malicious practices of the devil in seducing them, and with the falsehood and deceivableness of their own hearts, and how they have withstood them: and how deadly and loathsome the broad way that the wicked walk in, is, though it only seem pleasant. For

such honor have his Saints: such grace he bestoweth upon them which seek it of him in truth. And when God hath thus trained and made them fit for his service, then shall they find great ease and reward in serving God, and find by proof the exceeding benefit of a daily direction for the well ordering of their lives; yea they shall count themselves much unsettled, when any day shall pass them, which is not consecrated to God in that sort. Of such I wish them to learn the way, who would gladly please God (they say) as well as others, but yet all means are tedious to them to use, besides such as they think good, that is, sometimes to pray as it falleth out: but as for any further or certainer course to honor God in, they think it merely impossible for them to be brought unto, and therefore needless.

And as we are wont in our matters of law to resort to them for counsel, which are best acquainted with the laws, and best experienced in them; and in dangerous sicknesses to resort to those Physicians, who besides their knowledge have been a long time practicers, and have done many great cures: so in the practice of the rules for a godly life (all which be grounded upon the word of God) none can so well teach how, as they who have taken greatest pains in the practicing of them by long experience, besides their knowledge which they have in common with others. And therefore we are to resort to them as being best able to persuade us, that as we ought, so we may possibly attain to the daily practice of some certain duties, and the reverent using of the helps and means for the well passing of the day: whereunto, if they who profess, yea and preach, could submit themselves, to learn how to be settled by the furtherance of such as have gone before them, both in the searching out the way, and the practice of it; there need not be any doubt, but that many should both find it, and with much blessing give hearty thanks to God for it.



## CHAP. 4.

Of answer to this reason against the practice of daily direction: That it is toilsome and inconvenient, taking away all pleasure from men, and hinders their labors.

But now I have showed that it is not impossible, I will further answer their reasons, whereby they are led to think it a toile intolerable, and that which would bring exceeding inconvenience. First therefore, whereas they think it would make man's life irksome and a very toile, to bring ourselves to this point, that our lives should be overlooked and regarded throughout the day, and that we should observe certain rules for the well ordering of the same: the truth is, that there is no pleasure nor comfort in the world like it; no, nor (to them who know it should be so) without it, howsoever men think otherwise. Which if I can prove, I hope they will be far from this mind, to account it toile or wearisomeness. And for proof hereof, they may understand, that the Holy Ghost giveth the very contrary sentence and judgment of this matter. For whereas this right ordering of our lives, or framing them to obey God's commandments, is the greatest wisdom, even greater than that of the aged, experienced, or our teachers; yet of the same wisdom Solomon saith: All pleasures are not to be compared unto her: therefore if thou desirest pleasure, be wise, and provide that thy soul be safely kept from evil in the day, and throughout. For if it must needs be granted, that it is good at some time; then it followeth, that the oftener and more usually it is kept so, it is so much the better. And if it be the greatest pleasure of all other, to have our hearts and conversation with God someone hour in the day: then by many degrees is it the greatest pleasure, if we can by any good direction obtain it for the most part, or throughout the day. Agreeably to the which, that man of God, who was so well

experienced in these matters, testifieth, not of someone time of his life, but of some whole part thereof: I have had as much delight and pleasure in thy testimonies, as in all manner of riches. But you will say: What is this to prove, that he was thus minded through the day? He speaketh (I say) of his daily course in such places; as it is easy enough to see, according to that which I alleged before: All the day long is my meditation in thy law, that is, (as he expoundeth himself elsewhere) casting and pondering in his mind, how he might keep and might not break it, nor wander out of the way from the direction of it. And who so hath any practice of his knowledge and experience, what reward there is in serving God, doth clearly justify this to be true.

For wherefore doth the godly Christian take order to have his recourse to God by prayer, meditation, reading, when he can have opportunity? Wherefore is he fearful of ill company, and desirous of good? Why dareth he not fashion himself after the world in their common profane delights? Why is the holy assembly of Saints most desired of him; but because it is the pleasure, which he seeketh above other? When no man doubteth, but that he hath both leisure as well as other, and occasions enough offered him to the contrary, if he found not greater delight in this course than any other, or if there were not pleasure in the Christian life; and so the more Christian-like, the more pleasure. Why would the best Christians in all ages, suffer mocks, reproaches, displeasure of their friends and betters, loss of their goods and other liberties: and in such times and places as their profession hath been pursued with imprisonment, banishment, yea, and death itself; go under all with free choice, rather than to enjoy all other pleasures of sin, as other have done?

Indeed I grant, that this is not pleasure unto all: neither is that to be proved of me; but that it is a pleasure to those which love the Lord,

and no toil to be conversant with him in one part of their life or other all the day long; and that with delight it may be aimed at, as at a mark, that they may please God in the things which they go about, even throughout the day, and may have an eye to their actions which they do, that they may not offend him: This unto the upright in heart is such a pleasure, as without it there is none to them; although I deny not, but that there is much resistance against it, partly through corruption, and partly for want of the knowledge of it: who yet when they have further understanding, are most of all grieved for this, that they wandered so long uncheerfully, because they knew no better. And as for them which are not pure in heart, though indeed they please themselves some way or other, yet their pleasures are but pain: and though they follow a way that seemeth pleasant; yet the issues thereof are the ways of death: Insomuch that not only stolen waters, which are commonly most sweet, that is, unlawful liberties, are mixed with poison; but even the pleasures of wealth and marriage, which are things not unlawful, do hold them out of God's kingdom.

Thus it may appear, that it is no wearisome thing to be settled in such a course (wherein we may please God) as frailty will permit: but the sound and chiefest pleasure rather, yea and besides, it is that only, which so seasoneth our earthly and temporal liberties, that so they become lawful and pleasant to us also; and the duties and works of our callings, that they be not (as to others) burthensome and tedious. If all find it not so, yet let the truth remain, and let such learn otherwise. And if by the untowardness and rebellion of the heart, there be sometime found unpleasantness and wearisomeness in good things, even amongst the best, so that they be overcome thereof: yet must not the unruly heart, for all that, be yielded unto, but be the more strongly mastered, and all liberty which we find to be an hindrance from the life of godliness, removed.

But another reason why this course is alleged to be absurd, and inconvenient, is this: that men's labors should hereby be hindered, and their callings neglected; and so poverty grow upon the land, and many evils thereby: which were absurd, and not to be suffered. To the which it may be answered, that godly thrift, and Christian gaining, and lawful prospering in the world, do arise from hence: when a man doth so go to work in the world, and follow his dealings, that he be sure, that he goeth about them with a mind which is at peace with God, and well ordered, that is, guided by him; and when he doth faithfully and devoutly commend himself and his affairs every day to God's providence, and rest therein quietly; and when he doth as it were arm himself with circumspect heed-taking and wise regard, that he behave not himself profanely in the world, nor after the manner of men, but according to that which is written: Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, do all to the glory of God. And when for these purposes he shall resolve with himself, in the most convenient sort that he can, to begin the day in some Christian and godly manner, as I have set down in the daily direction, that all the rest of the day following, he may savor of the same; he shall in his duties doing about the world, please God, and he shall also (as far as God shall see it expedient) prosper in the same, as it is written: First seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and other things shall be cast upon you. And this is the labor, which should go with religion. This ought Christians to endeavor to come unto: wherein although all which fear God, have not a like measure of wisdom and grace, yet let them all, wherein they want and be behind in any part of duty, therein be willing to see their failings and slackness; and so shall it go well with them, and they shall daily come forward, and be better acquainted how to do earthly business with heavenly minds. And thus carrying themselves, they shall have much blessed experience of God's promises, in remembering, visiting and caring for them so graciously: whereas on the other side, such as rise early

and go late to bed, break their sleep often, and fare hardly and barely, (which sort use most means to be rich, and are most like to get the same) yet not attempting these things through God's help, not usually and oft craving his grace and direction, not having their minds seasoned with piety and the fear of God, not being patient, sober-minded, and watchful against the evils which will meet with them, but profane, rash and worldly; cannot find God's blessing in their course. If they gain and gather, they may (I deny not) flourish and prosper in the world a while; yet is all but as Judas his soppe, and the Israelites quail, to become bane and poison unto them: the Lord hath heaped hot coals upon their heads, and increaseth their damnation thereby the more swiftly; and oftentimes, they are needy (that is, unsatisfied) for all their shifts, and therefore never the richer: and many of them poor indeed, putting their money into a bottomless purse, and that although they toile for much, yet enjoy nothing. Which kind of men provide ill for themselves many other ways, in omitting the chief duties which appertain to them; for they fill their lives with much unquietness, fretting's, impatience, quarrels, cursing's and such like: and when death cometh, (although they be little thought on in the mean season) these things will grow to some hard reckoning: and in such the proverb is verified, That though they be early up, yet are they never the near. For what pleasure doth God take in their toiling, when they go to it like swine, not beginning, proceeding and ending in him, that is, by his direction?

And whereas they apply another proverb in reproach to them which will first see God served thus throughout their course, namely this: That the furthest way about, is the nearest way home, with then; they need not be ashamed of it. For as the nearest way doth not always bring a man soonest to his journeys end, when he must go over hedge and ditch, through mire and water: so they who go roundly

and directly to their earthly affairs and worldly dealings, as soon as they are up, and (as they say) from their bed to their business, refusing or omitting the daily duty of renewing their prayers, their purposes and care to live godly; they may (I deny not) go a nearer way then the other, but they do nothing less than attain that which they seek. For as all to whom I direct my speech, are such as would fain please God, as well as be maintained in the world; so they must look for their success and blessing from him, and not from their own labor, industry and wisdom: and therefore they must daily seek it at his hands by hearty prayer; and as they must not tempt him by neglecting pains and travel, so they must not trust to their labor alone: for so they declare, that to be all in all with them, whiles they make hast to that, and let the principal go.

For while they do so, they are snared by the devil: who setteth, not hedges and ditches in their way, (for by them yet they might have passage, though more slow) but he pitcheth nets to entangle them, and lime twigs to hold them; that at evening they shall feel and see with heavy cheer, that having left God behind them, for all their hast they are much more held back in respect of the other, who were thought to go a great way about. For though they have outward success in the things they take in hand, yet through hast and rashness, brawls and vexations, and minds fraught with earthliness, and such like annoyances; and remembering that they have toiled as hirelings and slaves, and not as servants to God by walking Christianly in their calling, (for such may go to their work joyfully) they find more sorrow at night, then the profit of the day was worth, even in the estimation of common persons, and more loss of grace then their worldly gain can possibly recompense. But if they see not their danger, or seeing it, if they sleep in their sins which brought it, and repent not of them; that is worst of all. So that oft times it falleth out thereby, that they are constrained by the check of their

conscience to cease from their labors for a time, or lose some piece of their bodily rest, to recover their inward peace again with the Lord and the good mind which was in them before, (if they be such as had any better at any time, for of such I speak:) whiles the other who go to work religiously, and take direction from God, break not off their labors at all, but go forward, and that in quietness also.

Who seeth not now, that such are further set back who think to be most forward, by separating Christian duties from their earthly business? For as he riddeth not most work, who goeth to it most early, when his instruments which he should use in the performance of the same, be blunt and dull; seeing, besides that he wearieth himself, the work is slacked and marred: so he that will not frame himself, so to perform the duties of his outward calling, that his mind may still attend upon God by faith, goeth about it preposterously, and shall find his success answerable. And if it be thus with the better sort, judge in what case they be, who, so that the penny may come in, care not though they be as like the ox and the asse in sense of good things and understanding, as they be like unto them in servile work and drudgery. And by this (I hope) it appears, that godliness hinders not men's labors, neither decays the Commonwealth. Nay who seeth not, that such labor were rather pleasure without peril, which worldly men are not acquainted with: and the Commonwealth consequently, should flourish much more, having a certain promise of blessing?

## **CHAP. 5.**

Of an answer to another reason against daily directing of us: That it would break off all society and fellowship amongst men.

Another reason why men cannot follow any direction daily, as is required, is this: They say, that it would be no world, if all men should be brought to such a mopish life: they mean, there should be no familiarity nor good fellowship amongst men; one should have no dealings with another; and so in time, traffic and merchandise would fail: and by means hereof, leaving of men's callings, disobedience to prince and laws, poverty, complaints, and such like would ensue and follow: and the least evil which were like to come of this new devised fantasy (they say) would be very monkery. This objection I do not think to arise or proceed from such as know what the godly life meaneth: but lest it being cast in the teeth of some weak Christians, that this is the fruit of these fantasies and revelations, which they call Godliness, and so hereby some might be troubled, I will answer it therefore. Whereas they say, it would be a strange world, if men could be brought so far from the corrupt and profane fashion of the common sort, that they would submit themselves to a daily direction of their lives after the word of God: it is true indeed, that it would seem strange to those which are contrarily minded; but that would make it never the worse: for such count it a strange thing (as the Apostle saith) that other men run not after the same excess of riot that they do: and therefore speak they evil of them. But though it would seem strange, yet would it not bring an overthrow nor confusion in states, in order, in laws, neither break off societies and fellowships amongst men: but every man should much better carry himself in all these, and the things themselves be stablished more purely, and the evil that cleaveth to them, be the more easily and sooner purged. And as for the taking away and the breaking of ill customs, the cutting off of ungodly fellowships, the rooting out of dissolute merry-makings, and the corrupt and evil fashions and talk which do drive God from men's tables and companies, it were to be wished, although it should be with the murmuring and complaining of many, yet that we might once see it amongst us: yea I say, it were



to be wished heartily, that the notable ill practices, customs and fashions in towns and companies of men, which uphold and maintain the old world and cursed fellowships in it, were overthrown, and with the tables of the money changers cast down: as houses of play and bawdry, where they are known to be; stage-plays, May-games, Lord of misrule, Morrice-dancing's, flocking's and meetings together at victualling houses, Inns and taverns usually, needlessly and dangerously, with superfluous drinking's and drunkenness, swearing's, quarrelling's, swaggering, deriding and disgracing of sincere preaching of the word, railing on preachers themselves, and mocking of such as desire to follow their doctrine; with many other such abominations: also jesters, flatterers, slanderers and profaners of the Lord's Sabbaths, in bargaining, gaining, worldly dealings and absence from the house of God, &c. Are not these with such other, the scum and kennel stuff that poison many thousands? And are not these for all that, the delights of infinite people? And is the removing and taking away of these, and changing of such cursed fashions and customs into civil and religious orders, the breaking off of Christian fellowship? And as for other than it, what may better be spared than they? And what traffic and merchandize is hindered by the reforming of such disorders and abuses? And were the abandoning of these, the leavings of men's callings and disobedience to prince? When who seeth not, that it were the way to live in obedience, and to follow men's callings diligently? And what complaints are occasioned hereby, but by such as being called from their sins are not to be pitied? Indeed daily care of well living doth chase away these, even as a whirlwind: and God in his good time remove them: that as the holy man king David said of his servants and subjects: A froward heart shall not dwell in my house, him that privily slandereth his neighbor will I destroy, him that hath a proud look and an high heart, I cannot suffer; and such like: so we might once see and have them, and all of like sort, odious

amongst us. And whereas they say that it is to set up and bring in monkery again, to betake men's selves to any better course of living, than is commonly practiced, I answer: That I cannot easily say, whether the monks in their hypocrisy, superstition and false worship of God, were greater sinners than these objectors in their profaneness and Atheism, who worship not God at all; unless we will call a mocking of God, a worshipping of him. And this is the answer, which I will vouchsafe them.

## **CHAP. 6.**

Of the doubts and objections which weak Christians ought to propound, until they be satisfied; namely, how they may attain to such direction daily: and answer thereto: and other like, namely, that they count it hard: and what such ought to do.

But as I have said before, (to let these cavils go, as not fit to trouble them who would do well) I think these and the like, the meetest objections for such as are willing to learn: first, that they see not how they might be able to attain to the practice of any good and Christian direction, and constantly keep the same: and secondly, how they may, because they are unacquainted with it, be armed with patience against the mocks and discouragements of such as might dismay them from it. For the first, it is meet, that such as shall learn and practice it, be willing and desirous of it: which they may easily see cause of, if they consider what unsettledness is in their lives, and what unfitness of mind to serve God, when they have not by some good order taking for the same, resolved and accustomed themselves thereunto, that is, to walk with God every day; and how much they are the worse, when they have not done so, but neglected the same. Also it helpeth much hereto, that they make this account with

themselves, that they deal about nothing of such value or importance in the world, as ought by right to hinder or draw them from it.

And yet when they be brought to this, they must strive much against untowardness and sloth, which hangeth in their members (as if a lion were in the way:) and withal, they must call back and hold in, their earthly affections and carnal desires from nestling themselves any way here below, so that they be not clogged thereby and made unfit for this work: and then a full persuasion they must have, that their fruit shall be far above their labor. And to one thus prepared, I doubt not (God working by means) nay, I warrant it from God, that the rules which I have set down, or the like, for safe conducting a Christian in his way, shall be found both possible in the beginning, and easy in time and pleasant; and the gain of the travel such, as he will not readily lose or forgo again.

And before he be thoroughly acquainted with the practice of this, let him impart his doubts to such as may most conveniently satisfy him in the same, and so commend himself to the grace of God in this new enterprise, betaking himself utterly from his former wandering and uncertain serving of God: and let him after a week, and so after a month, take view of his doings, to see what is amiss, and what is wanting, that it may be helped: if any slothful deferring or omitting of any necessary part of duty hath been, that it may be restored: if any blessing be seen thereby, that it may be increased by procuring the continuance of it. And when he shall have had experience of good success therein, he shall be past the danger or discouragement which Ishmael's progeny (I mean the generation of scorers and mockers) may raise unto him. For as infinite swarms of vain and hurtful thoughts do occupy and fill the minds of such as have not earnestly set themselves against them: so through God's grace, after they have accustomed themselves to better cogitations, and weaned themselves

of purpose from their old conversation, they shall find occasions enough to honor God, in doing one good duty or other; so that, they shall neither need to be idle nor unprofitable. Which thing if many were persuaded of, they would both taste and try it; which now they do not, because (as they say) if they should not suffer their hearts to wander and rove everywhere as they are carried, but restrain them, they know not how they could live.

But I will proceed with other objections which are yet behind: among which, this troubleth many of God's poor children, that they fear they shall never bring their hearts to a daily course of Christian walking, seeing they are so weak and have so much to do in subduing someone unruly affection. The perverse sort object the same, who say they could like well, that men should be taught a good order and course, but in no wise can abide that it should be daily and continual: and I have in a manner answered it before. For what is that which they mislike herein? It is not the thing itself, nor the direction for their life in general (they say:) but that continual binding them to it, which is urged, is a weariness that they cannot bear. But to leave them as sufficiently answered before, I turn to these in whose name this objection is here propounded, to whom this I say: As God in the Scripture requireth perseverance in a good course to the end; even so, they which will faithfully submit themselves unto that doctrine, cannot but like also to be daily settled in such an estate as leadeth thereto: (for otherwise, how shall they be sure that their master when he cometh, shall find them occupied, Luk. 19:13?) and if they do so, the hardness of it will soon be allayed, and they shall in short time find it a sweet and pleasant way (as Christ calleth it, Mat. 11:30.) to his kingdom: so that the tediousness (as they count it) being taken away in great part, there is no cause why they should fear that, as too hard, which shall not hurt them; or seek to shun that as too unpleasant, the benefit whereof they have not proved.

Some say, they like it well, and would with all their hearts that they could practice this direction, but they have so many lets to hold them off and cut them from it, that they do not see, how they shall in any mean sort perform the duties through the day, required in it. But such are to know, that the chiefest lets of all from a godly life (which be, the intemperance of the mind, and unbridled lusts thereof) are by this direction best remedied and stayed: the most of other which are outward in the world (as provocations, temptations, and other like occasions) are hereby also, and by the well ordering of the affections prevented and avoided, or the easilier borne. And as for the third kind, which are, men's callings, dealings, labors, which (through ignorance) many do mean when they complain of hindrances; are none at all, but as they are made by the unskillfulness, carelessness or other sin of the party which ill useth them. And to this purpose I will tell thee what I have heard a man of good account and long experience say: I never had such lets, as far as I can call to remembrance, but if my heart had been held in good government, I might have served God with peace, and gone forward in the course which I propounded. Which what differeth it from that in the Proverbs: Keep thine heart with all diligence, for from thence cometh life? So that ye see the chief hindrances are unfaithfulness, hardness of heart, frowardness, licentiousness, and such like evil distemperatures of the heart: by means whereof, outward occasions of sinning do the easilier provoke us; and our lawfullest actions which we go about, come untowardly to pass.

But perhaps they will reply thus: We would sometime pray or read by ourselves, or look to some other duties which God requireth, for the well guiding of our lives, when we must needs go about our own work, or the princes business, or such like lets of one sort or other call us away, so that we cannot perform them: whereas they which are free from these outward businesses and services, may take their

liberty in these spiritual duties. But I ask this question of them again: Why they should be most earnestly bent to prayer and reading at such times, when they see other duties to be laid upon them necessarily? Is it not because they see they cannot do them, that the devil setteth them forward so hotly at such a time to go about them, that they may think themselves to be godlier than they be, and so be deceived? And why are they not but even half so fervent in going about reading, praying and other heavenly serving of God, when they have time and leisure? Which if they be, it is well: let them rest with peace therein, so shall they be the fitter to outward duties; and so doing, they must not count themselves letted, when they do that which is their calling: If they do not, let them wisely mark how they be blind-folded on both sides; and make conscience so to do the one duty in his season, that the other be not counted an hindrance of them from the serving of God, but be performed also, and that with cheerfulness, when it lieth upon them. And that which I answer in this one, I would have to be understood of all other of the like kind of questions: and therefore hereof enough. Only I think good to put them in mind, that when two duties meet together at one time, both being of great weight, that they pray God to give them discretion to consider, which is most necessary (always following the light which God giveth them;) and in things indifferent, to do that which is most to God's glory, their own peace and the benefit of their brethren.

Another sort there is, who are not troubled about this, yet have another doubt which discourageth them very much from practicing such a Christian course. For when they hear that there must not only be appointed set times to pray and meditate, but also that in our going through the whole day, we must watch against evil, and even in particular actions be circumspect that we sin not against our knowledge, they ask whether they may not have their minds on their work, while they are at it? If it be granted them, they ask how they

shall do both? I say, no scruple is to be made of this, but that there should be a minding, and that carefully, of those things which we do, though they be not spiritual: neither needed there be any question made of this, but that they have after the manner of carnal and worldly men, so fraught and stuffed their heads with earthly thoughts and worldly desires, that they cannot unburden themselves of them, when they pray unto God. And therefore when he doth afterward give them conscience thereof and of other sins, they are so grieved to remember their long continued offense that way, in that they were wont to fill their hearts with all sensuality and worldliness, that now they think they displease God, when they have them set upon their business at all: even as he that hath abused music, mirth or meat dangerously, thinks afterward, that he may not use them in any sort: whereas they may understand, that there is no such disagreement or contrariety betwixt holy things and lawful liberties, (neither therefore betwixt spiritual duties, and the works of our calling) but that there may be recourse had from the one to the other, without quenching the gifts of God's spirit in us. And he that doth both of them in their season, as becometh him (I mean with a single and honest heart) may worship God in prayer, hearing his word, or any such like, and not be distracted at the same time by earthly thoughts and fantasies, so as they should interrupt and break him off: and again the same man may be occupied in his earthly affairs and business in such wise, that he coming to them with a religious and well-ordered heart, need not be distracted, unsettled, or made unfit thereby to other duties of Christianity afterwards, nor anything more earthly minded while he is at them. For why? Even they are the work which God hath set him about: and therefore obeying him therein, he may be quiet, yea and cheerful: which God alloweth us freely, if we could be wise to see and use our liberties to our good. For a godly minded man, who hath tasted how precious and sweet a thing it is, to keep peace with God in all his ways, and hath

experience how soon his heart is drawn into the world by the deceitfulness of sin, will with such faithfulness keep his affection knit unto goodness, as he knoweth he ought to do, that he is not drowned in the world, so soon as he is occupied in it, nor made drunk with the commodities of it (as men of the world are) so soon as he meddleth with them; and yet shall both think, talk and deal about his worldly affairs as far as becometh him. This (I confess) is a rare grace and a singular gift of God: but yet, it is bestowed upon them, which make account of it above all that is transitory and earthly. And it requireth especial assistance of God's spirit, that a Christian may carry himself after such a manner among men, that both the duties be rightly performed: and that we so behave ourselves, that we may with fitness of mind be ready (as it becometh us) to worship God, and also with sobriety to use our lawful liberties in the things of this life: and especially so, as that we fail not in the manner of doing it, that is, by doing the same either negligently, or unwisely. But these things being regarded, a man may be conversant in both duties, as I have said, in such sort as God may be pleased, with attendance given to then, (as, labor, bargain, talk of such things as be needful in our calling, be occupied in the affairs of the world, live in the married estate, &c.) and yet keep his heart in frame and good order still: that so whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do else, we may do all to the honor and praise of God.

## **CHAP. 7.**

Of other objections of the weak: as, that they cannot see how they should walk thus, while they live in such an evil world: and of other like objections, with answers thereto.



But some cannot be satisfied in one thing which I said before: namely, that the chief let, that holdeth us from the faithful and holy keeping of our lives in good order from time to time, is our distempered heart: for they are persuaded, how well soever they look to their hearts, yet as long as they live in such an evil world as this is, they must needs be cast back and hindered. For they say, that few give themselves to any such devotion, as through the day to make most account of the life to come, and to have their hearts occupied about such desires as estrange them from the earth; but rather provocations to evil one way or other prevail with them: and in few places examples of goodness are to be seen. Besides, though we be well taught by the word in the assembly; yet abroad, the doctrine which we hear is as much discredited again by strength and boldness in sin among many, and so it is caused to be forgotten and of no force: which are great causes why Christians are so cooled, as they be at this day, and in no commendable sort, suffer their light to shine: especially, we will yield to them, they say, if we will weigh, how unfit we are for such heavenly conversation, through our long custom in darkness and sin. To the which it must needs be answered: that much is in these, but yet not so much, that they might think themselves to have just excuse for their earthly minds and faint hearts, by these discouragements and occasions. There is a far more excellent use to be made of them, and clean contrary. Did our Savior teach his disciples and the believers of his time, to make no other profit of the troubles, which they should meet with in the world? Did he foretell them, that they should find, tribulation in the world, to the end they should be discouraged? Nay, to be of good comfort, because he had overcome the world. When he told them, that few should so like of the Christian way, that they would walk in it, did he give them leave to stay their course also? Yea rather he stirred them up to be the more earnest themselves to enter in at the straight gate. So when any of their own weakness did appear, as pride of heart,

dreaming of worldly prosperity, great want of faith, and such like; did he wink at them, because they had long been accustomed to them? Did he not rather the more take occasion to pull them out of them, saying sometime, O ye of little faith: at other times, The Lord's of nations seek after these things: but it shall not be so with you, but he that is greatest among you, shall be least? Even so let us do: the more iniquity we behold among men, the more let us estrange ourselves from such, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, and take no occasion to be anything more backward by that: for then, we must never look to do good, seeing we shall always have such among us. For there shall always be enmity betwixt the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent: and the dragon shall make war with them that keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus, Rev. 12:17: and their dwelling is, as was the dwelling of the church of Pergamos, where Satan's throne is, Rev. 2:13. But let us take occasion therefore to settle our hearts more firmly by our living among such, in the love of goodness, and set more store by them whom God hath raised up to be as watchmen and good examples among us: let us love the saints with a more perfect love, even such as excel in virtue, and break not of our fellowship with them when occasions are offered, lest we have our acquaintance with devils.

If any object and say: Though all be not so zealous as you, nor show it not after the same manner, neither follow any such direction; yet they may be as well occupied, and serve God as well as you, or any such: I answer, if they have peace to Godward, and can approve their state to be good by his word, I am glad: I envy them not: I would the gifts of God were multiplied in them tenfold: I desire the same myself: mine eye is not evil, to see them receive good. And therefore let us both join together, and not be divided, seeing we both seek to please God; and let us communicate one with the other, that one may

help another, and both help our weak brethren: for there should be nothing too much if all our wisdom and diligence were used, and if all the persuasions that we both could bring forth for the guiding and directing of God's people in their course, were laid together; yea, all would be little enough to make ourselves fit to honor our God, and to resist the evil which we shall meet with and be allured unto in the world. This therefore let us do and bind together, if there be upright hearts in us both: or he that refuseth, let him go for a vain boaster. Neither is it my meaning to call in question by this direction, men's serving of God, as though either none practiced a better, fuller and perfecter; or to tie any who know a better, unto this: but to help such as do stand in need, and to teach them to govern themselves in some good sort, who for want of knowledge and experience cannot (though they be never so willing) direct themselves. If any see further: my desire is, that he would in commiseration and pity of the ignorance and wandering course of his poor brethren, impart that which God hath given him, to their relief and comfort: and let this which is weakly done of me and yet soundly, be corrected and bettered, rather than disliked, until it be made more full and manifest. But if in secret pride of heart, any should swell against this, as being readier to malign and envy it, then to correct it: I would desire him not to hinder and hold back such as (I am sure) for want of some certain directing of them, are much unsettled and inconstant in their lives, and therefore live with the more discomfort.

There are yet others, who think the labor to be but vain which is taken in persuading men hereunto: because the most receive not our counsel; and they which do, take little good by it, only they may in outward show seem to go before others. To whom I answer: that as I look not that the most men should receive it, seeing I direct it only to the children of God, who only can use it, though others may repent and be ashamed by it: so I doubt nothing, but that they which do,

shall be much helped forward by it to practice the godly life with more ease and readiness, unless they be such as use it for fashion and ceremoniously; as some which take themselves to be the Lord's, may do. I grant it may be more profitable to one then to another, according to the diverse measure of grace which everyone hath received of God: but he which is a faithful user of it, having least measure, shall not go without great blessing thereby. And if some who would do well, hold not on in steadfast watching against evil through the day, so constantly and commendably as some others do; but through strength and superfluity of natural corruption in them, and by outward occasions and for want of experience, do break out into wrath sometime, or peevishness, anger and impatience, or lightness of heart and unsettledness, or should offend by evil speaking or ill example in their life, &c: yet must we not by and by conclude, that all which they do, is vain, and that they had been as good never to have entered at all into the profession and covenanting of such a course. But thus they ought to think, that if they be turned out of the way, and mastered of their affections, when they have had a good regard of their lives oft times, and have taken order in the morning perhaps to keep their hearts diligently throughout the day; they may well think and look for it, that on other days they shall much more grossly offend, and have their minds more violently carried to the fulfilling of their lusts, when little or no help hath been used against the same.

Besides this, we have yet another benefit by bringing ourselves daily to consider our ways: that the infirmities and wants which we have seen in our lives, do both show us, that we have still matter sufficient in ourselves to humble us, and to cause us to be charitable rather than severe judges of our brethren; and also that we have just cause to continue our prayers to God, to pardon and weaken the same in us more and more, rejoicing that they please us not, nor blindfold us,

so, as that we be made unwilling to see them: and hereby we shall sooner return, if we have broken off our course through some passion over-ruling us for the time, then if we should in a careless and negligent estate, have fallen after the same manner. And therefore although when we have read and seen what this direction is, it may raise many thoughts in us against it, not having as yet any experience or proof of it; yet let us not do as many will, who if it like them not at the first hearing, they do not wisely consider further of it, but flatly resolve not to meddle with it: who were to be requested rather, if the whole should seem more then they could be brought unto, at the first to take in hand some part of it, till God shall let them see further into it, and the necessity of the whole: although I do not say, that I would give liberty of omitting any point of it (wittingly and willingly) to such as have learned to see all to be needful and necessary.

## **CHAP. 8.**

Of the objection of weak Christians who cannot read: and another, of them that are troubled through some scriptures: and answer to both.

If ye will ask, what they shall do, which cannot read, and therefore can neither enjoy the benefit of this nor such other helps, in any such ample manner as others may: I answer, that they must needs fare the worse for want of that gift, (although I could wish that many which can read, used it more oft, and in purer and more reverent manner then they do.) But if they be such as are to be counseled, they must (as they are able) provide, that they may with more diligence giving both to preaching, and hearing other read, and prayer, supply that want of theirs, as far as may be; and if they cannot hope for to obtain a gift of praying according to their necessities, then to learn some

form of prayer, as well in respect of the shortness thereof fit for their memory, as in regard of the matter, meetest for their estate and condition, as it shall be ordinarily and for the most part: and when it alters by reason of some affliction or otherwise, then to learn to pray according to their present occasions and necessity. How unsavory soever these things may seem to some, it shall be but to such as judge after the flesh, and like too well, and look too nearly to the examples of them who neglect these duties very much or altogether, to follow them. And whereas they may object again perhaps, that they cannot bestow such labor upon these things: I say, these things are greater than they seem to make them: but for their labor, let it be such as may stand with their callings duly followed; but let them be teachable. But if a mean gain and commodity might be reaped by greater labor and more time bestowed of them, then the learning of prayers, or the attaining to the ability and gift of reading would require: I think that neither of them both would be counted hard to come by and attain to. In few words let them take this for an answer, that if they benefit not themselves by the public means by all possible diligence, also if they be not ready to profit by the help of other by all good occasions and opportunity; they must needs come behind in reaping profit or fruit, and shall hardly grow to direct themselves safely and with holy peace, as it were meet for them in such a troublesome world and many ways dangerous, as they live in.

Some (to draw towards an end) say: nothing troubleth them so much in all that I have said, as the urging of these speeches: All the day long we must meditate on the law: and pass the whole time of our dwelling here in fear: Also, Whatsoever we do, eat or drink, &c. And, Take heed, lest at any time there be in any of you an evil heart, and unfaithful, to depart away from the living God. These and such like places they confess, (in their judgment) are urged too sore, and they could else be content with all their hearts to glorify God sometime,

and in some parts of their lives as they are able: but what comfort shall it be (say they) when we have done what we can, to think yet, that God is never the more pleased with us; because we know we have omitted many things which we ought to have done, and committed the contrary? I answer: The sense of the places I cannot alter; and yet I will not leave them still in their doubt and perplexity: but for their further satisfying, I will not refuse to unfold them more clearly, and help them to some stay and resolution. And first let them be persuaded of this, that there is nothing in these or any such like scriptures, which may justly dismay him that seeketh the Lord in truth; neither is any lawful liberty hereby denied to a Christian in such benefits, as God hath left unto him to be enjoyed: only unto the flesh, whereto we are not debtors, are we commanded to bid battle, and that so far as of us frail men (but yet endued with God's spirit) may be performed. Yet more particularly to speak to them, I dissemble not my meaning plainly to be this: that if any time of the day, or part of our life, we think we may take any liberty to evil and sin, (no not then when we have before been best occupied; for after such times commonly do men most give themselves the bridle:) this cannot be done without manifest contempt of these scriptures, and consequently of the majesty of God, who knowing what is best for us, hath thought good thus to direct us. And yet (alas) how common this is in many which go for good Christians, we may see with grief: who as though God had given them sometimes to offend in, and some liberties which in his word are condemned, (which were to make him say and unsay: and to deny and affirm the same things) I say, as though it were thus, they do by every small occasion let loose the reins to licentiousness: and yet I deny not but that they do many things commendably. But what doth that avail them? For as dead flies do cause to stink and putrefy the ointment of the Apothecary: so some ill parts of life and dead fruits mixed with commendable virtues, do spoil them of their virtue and beauty, that they have no favor in the

sight of God, neither give they any sweet smell or savor unto men: and as the leaven though it be but a little, doth sour and leaven the whole lump of dough; so some strong corruptions being suffered to bear sway in the life, do corrupt even that which otherwise would be good. For as it is a blemish and deformity in nature, to see in a man's body, one eye or leg small and the other great: so if there be not proportion and agreeableness in our lives betwixt one part of it and another, it is an utter deformity in the whole.

They think it hard to be bound, (they say) to bring particularities of their lives under examination, and themselves to be held within the compass of any such rules, as should debar them of any liberty which they shall think good for them: and that it were too foolish for them to think necessary, and too servile to obey and follow them. But let them remember what they said: that they are willing to do what duties they can; and then let them hear me: what servitude it is, I lately set down; that is, only a stopping of the course of flesh and our own corrupt will and affections: the which yet if we live after, we shall die, and be cut off from our inheritance with God and with Christ. Indeed by these means, we should bridle many passions of pride, loftiness, swelling; and break off many boisterous outrages which rise up in us, as wrath, frowardness, heart-burning; and quench many fiery darts of concupiscence, unclean lusts, and wantonness; with other such fond and dangerous delights, which lead men to destruction; and clear our lives, season our tongues with Christian talk, as well as cleanse our hearts. And is there any man which rejoiceth in the name of a Christian, who would have his liberty in these evils? What did I say? Liberty? Nay, who would become a bondman (for to speak properly and truly, that is bondage in the highest degree) to his own intemperate affections and desires? As for the variety of good liberties, which our most merciful God hath entrusted us with, which are both many and comfortable in



themselves, we may use them all in the Lord, so that God have his honor thereby: but whiles we take our part in them, the Lord may not lose his part due to him; in a word, whiles we use them soberly, and with care not to offend, and that nothing be done against knowledge and peace therein. And is not this sufficient and enough for all men which are the Lord's? I am sure when men cannot be content to keep themselves at this stay, as they pay dearly for every stolen liberty, so they must say, when they have had their minds satisfied, after all: The godly life excelleth; and sing the doleful song of them who have learned it somewhat too late by their woeful experience; that Measure is a treasure: when their mirth is at an end. For do we not see, that when Christians have walked in a good course for a time; and after, have begun to shake off the yoke of obedience, and have again sought liberty to the flesh, alleging this: What? must we be always pent in, to look to our ways? See we not (I say) that God hath in some hour or day, given them up into their own hands, in haste and rashness to run with greediness to the fulfilling of their hearts desire which they have sought? And in that one hour to lay a foundation of sorrow for many years after? But have they afterwards in like haste and with ease returned again? Nay, then they must have showed themselves wiser than some, who were wise: and more strong than Samson the strongest in his time; who after he had prostituted and made himself a sot and slave to a base mistress, recovered not himself again, until he had ground in the prison like an horse, both his eyes being put out, and serving to make the uncircumcised pastime, who had been the joy and glory of the people of God. But to return from Samson: have they not tried what it hath gained them, to be at their own hand and liberty, whiles they have thereby run into shameful sins and offenses? Thousands with grief may witness this truth with me, and can say by miserable experience, that all sound comfort and liberty to be desired and rested in, is in this: that everyone seek to be contented with the liberty which God

giveth him, remembering that which is written: A good conscience is a continual banquet. We know, that through frailty, forgetfulness and the remainder of our corruption, the best shall too oft go out of the way: therefore they need not seek occasions to do so, but to avoid them rather, and so obey the commandment of God: Put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. This I trust may suffice for the unfolding of the forenamed Scriptures, and to answer any reasonable man to his full contentation. And let such (in the fear of God) cease marveling, why we should be so careful to please God, even through the day, and one day as well as another; because besides other reasons, which in their proper place I have set down, this is to be weighed: that Christianity is like to a trade or occupation, wherein no good will be done, nor profit arise, except it be thoroughly followed and with great diligence, and especially this point regarded: that one thing be not lost or neglected, while another is followed, nor one duty slacked while another is performed. And thus I shut up my answer to this last objection, saying: That the fore-mentioned Scriptures and other like them, are not fearful to God's children, neither shall need to trouble any, who will take heed that they trouble not themselves by willfulness and gross negligence; but do in the simplicity of their heart show themselves teachable to that which they know of the will of God, although they find many wants in themselves, so as they groan under the burden of them, and be truly cast down for the sins which they have committed: for the best are under no better condition, although they may excel their brethren in some measure of grace; and therefore they confess, that when they have done all, they are unprofitable servants.

## **CHAP. 9.**

Of the objection: That Ministers may follow daily direction, but yet not therefore the people: and of such as object, That better counsel is given by the author than he himself will follow: with answer to both: and a larger answer to the first objection in Chapter 2.

The other objections which remain, are few, and shall in few words be answered. Of the which this is one: Though you that have nothing to trouble you, but sit quiet at your studies and lead a scholars life, may be fit to guide yourselves in such a manner as here hath been set down (as indeed it becometh you well, and all do look for it at your hands, who should be lights unto others:) yet it is not therefore to be urged upon us. Yea these Objectors do further allege: If it be hard, even for you scholars and ministers, to observe it, who have so many helps to set you forward over we have; there is small equity in it, that we should be enjoined the same performance of duty which is required of you: our hindrances and lets in the world being more and far greater than yours, and our helps and furtherance's fewer and weaker, as ye know. But to these I answer: As there are more helps to the learned and ministry, and fewer lets (who for the most part have their living provided them, and may be much more free (as they ought to be) from earthly entanglements, than others, except they love to have their hands and their heads full of worldly dealings:) so they have more duties to perform besides these, which are common to all private Christians. For they ought not to rest in the direction aforesaid, which is common to every private believer: but according to their special calling, as they are ministers, they ought to perform the several duties thereof publicly and privately, both by attendance to reading themselves, and also as watchmen to look unto others diligently, in exhorting, admonishing, rebuking, comforting and instructing them, as occasion shall be offered.

Further, it were meet for them to take a view of their weeks work at the end of it, to keep a register of God's special mercies and deliverances, and another of his chastisements and afflictions; and how they go under them, and profit by them: that by their experience they might the better bring on others. This (I say) and some other such duties ought to be looked to of such: so that private persons need not think themselves so sore pressed in respect of them; who if they look well to their charge, have a double duty to discharge in respect of others. Although I could wish, that they did in practice and in the course of their lives faithfully and carefully perform that, which is drawn out in common for every Christian: for with grief it may be spoken, but too truly, that many of them live as they list, very offensively; and both in performing the duties of their calling, and example, come much behind many of those, who by good right ought to be guided by them: but none are to stumble at the bad lives of such, forasmuch as there will always be in the ministry, offensive persons, who though they should go before the flock, yet come far behind them, to their just reproach; and (as Eli's sons) cause their holy calling to be had in contempt, and to be evil spoken of: from whom the people are not to fetch their light nor to take example. For though the calling itself be most glorious and fit to make and keep them heavenly minded, namely, seeing their labors and studies may be helpers of them to godliness, whereas other men's are full of toile, and occasions (through their weakness) to draw them to worldliness: yet except they be such themselves, as have the upper hand over their minds and hearts, and can hold them in subjection, and teach themselves when they teach the people, their studies will not only be full tedious unto them, and yield small profit to their flock; but also they shall be as apt to be deeply plunged in the world, and in idleness and vanity, as others: which will surely come to pass, till preaching, reading and godliness be with a better conscience regarded of them, and till it be their glory and crown to seek to gain many to God. So

that it is clear, that many ministers (as they handle the matter) find it not so easy above private persons [to live godly,] but are far off from keeping of a good course daily both in their general and particular calling: which yet is enjoined the people to do. And as for such as are more painful in their calling, and careful in their life to please God, though it must be granted, that they have many more helps in regard of their ministry, then private men; yet it is also to be considered, that their troubles and crosses are many more and greater than other Christians are for the most part; for they are more shot at by Satan and his instruments, they have many discouragements, unkindness's offered them, and hatred for their good will and for the doing of their duty, as unknown though known, besides their continual care over the flock of Christ. So that their crosses are many and great, and they have need of great grace to walk faithfully and fruitfully in their course. Therefore let none object, that the ministers (except some few whom God doth more specially privilege, for causes best known to him) because of their calling may easily keep a constant course in the fear of God, as though they had no lets nor discouragements: but let them know, that all have hindrances enough: and therefore according to the helps, which God hath given to everyone, both minister and hearer, let them grow thereby, and one not look upon another to be cooled and held back; but all cheer up their minds, and truss up their corrupt thoughts, which are ever haling and carrying them one way or other, and clogging them so, that they cannot go forward, but are ready to stumble one at the welfare and good report of another; as Peter did at the liberty of John, which he thinking to be greater than his own, said. What shall this man do?

Now as for them which will not mislike the counsel that is given them in this direction, if they could follow it: but they think the writer hereof to have wished better to other, then he can follow himself: let them yet weigh and take in good part his love to them

herein, whatsoever it have profited himself: and yet though he will say nothing of himself, lest any should think of him otherwise then he seeth or knoweth to be in him, yet he can put them out of doubt, that this doctrine hath been received, and conscionably practiced of some, even private Christians to their good contentation, and (as they are persuaded) to the plentiful recompense of their labor therein bestowed, even already: who yet have good hope, that the first attempting of it was, as the hardest to them, so the least gainful, in comparison of that which is to be looked for; and that the best is to come. And that the certain fruit, which they have reaped of the practicing it, in such weak manner as they could attain unto, in respect of the uncertain profit and comfort, which they received of their uncertain serving of God, before they were acquainted with it; they confess (as they be able to judge) to have been very great. This I say for their better encouragement, into whose hands this book shall come, that they may not fear, that this is thrust forth at adventure amongst men, when no proof hath been taken, how it hath wrought upon any before.

And yet this is no small benefit, (whatsoever others have done) that a man which desireth to please God, may know how to behave himself in this pilgrimage both towards God and men: how to proceed when he hath begun: how to comfort himself when he is heavy: how to raise up himself, when he is fallen: how to return when he hath gone out of the way: which (through God's blessing) with many such fruits, he may find here, and enjoy daily to his comfort: I say, here; (yet without any arrogancy) because though many good things may be reaped of many worthy men's labors, yet they have not driven at this one particular, Of daily directing a Christian, as I have done. And this for the satisfying of thy demand concerning the practice of this doctrine: and therefore fear not thou, that the Lord will leave thee in the middle way, when he hath blessed thee in the beginning thereof,

if thou withdrawest not thyself from his government; but he will show himself far more gracious to thee, according to the prayer which David made in faith to him, and obtained the fruit of it: O Lord thou hast been my hope ever since my youth: Cast me not away in the time of mine old age: when my strength shall fail, leave me not. And as this holy man of God (we see) distrusted his own weakness, yet through his long experience of God's favor and kindness, conceived assured hope thereof unto his end: so the best of us might justly fear (knowing the malice and subtlety of our enemy, besides our own exceeding frailties) that we should never be brought in safety to our end; and cry out daily against the unlikelihood's of continuance, which we see both in our own lives, and other men's. But above all these, either temptations and afflictions, or the doubts and fears which come thereby, our faith carrieth us to see into God's mind and purpose, and to wait through patience for the accomplishing of his promises, accordingly as it is written: We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation: And again: This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith: And, Greater his he that is in us, then he that is in the world.

But yet one thing (seeing I speaking of it before, did shut it up too briefly) remains necessary to be answered more fully. For when they hear the name of direction (though they who read the whole, may easily see what I mean thereby) they demand thus: What? Is there any other direction, then the word of God? And is that now at the first made our direction? But what Christian hath not labored to follow that in all ages, when no such invention as this, nor no such new found out direction, as ye mention, was known? Unless perhaps ye have found out any new thing beside the scripture; or, you see that in the Scripture, which none before you saw. I answer, that neither do I urge any other then the word commands, nor arrogate no skill, to teach and guide men's lives, then other of my brethren, who do

soundly and conscionably observe in reading the Scriptures, have found out and do teach: and that is, That every day the substance of godliness ought to be practiced of every true Christian; and that according to his knowledge, he should holily and religiously endeavor to make the same conscience of his thoughts, words and deeds every day, which at any time or any day he hath done, when he looked best unto them. And because the rules of God's word, and practices of men's lives do not so commonly and easily meet together; but even among the godly it is much complained of, that they most hardly can fasten upon a good course, and that even the very knowledge of it, for want of plain and daily teaching, is in many places much wanting: therefore I say further, that the frailty and weakness of such doth require, that there be some help ministered to them by such as have experience: and that which is sufficiently taught in the Canonical Scripture, here and there for the directing of them, had need to be gathered together both plainly and plentifully in one Treatise for them, to have it at hand by them, and to read oft, as they shall be able, and shall see it necessary: and not to send honest and well-disposed Christians, to seek for every instruction which they shall have need of, to every book and chapter of the Bible: which neither God doth enjoin them, neither they could possibly find, though they had leisure, no not one of a thousand, but are to be helped by the sermons and writings of their teachers. For as no man will say, there is no use of the Apothecaries shoppe to fetch thence roots and herbs for necessary use, because they grow in fields and gardens: so neither is the writing of particular treatises needless, although all necessary points of instruction are to be found in the Canonical Scriptures.

And as the sermons of many have been penned to good purpose, to help such as are well disposed; some directing particularly how to pray; some how to receive the holy communion; some how to fast,



&c. so I have labored in this treatise to direct men how to live in this present world, so as they may walk with God: even by bringing them from a general and confused thought of Christianity to a daily and particular care of godliness throughout their whole course. And seeing (as our Savior saith) The light of the body is the eye; so the light of the whole life, is the effectual and powerful knowledge of God's will, and a well ordered heart, and governing of the unruly affections: therefore I have herein declared how such knowledge must be sought, and the heart of a Christian be daily governed in the cogitations and desires of it, that they may draw the life in the several actions and parts thereof unto the obedience of Christ. Yet I deny not, but that men of experience, who have long accustomed themselves to the daily and true fear of God, may direct themselves better, then that such should need to tie themselves to these rules or such like of another man's drawing; who if they have learning, and do keep a daily observing of their ways and affections, shall be best able thereby to govern and guide themselves: of which sort, I wish there were many, who could help forward other, rather than stand in need of help themselves. But too few there are of them: for although many for their knowledge might, yet they do not so narrowly look to themselves, how they obey that which they know, but that a direction drawn out of the word of God by another man's labor and industry, may do them good. Among whom, if there should be some, who shall condemn this my writing as curious, (as there are many who cannot think any such doctrine necessary) I rest in that which hath moved me to take it in hand.

The objections which remain, are in regard of the persons and states of men: as, the mighty and the mean, the ruler or magistrate, the poor servant, laborer and workman, the traveler, or whosoever he be, or in what state soever, having his hands full of business, (so as his calling be allowed of God, and profitable to men) that which hath

been answered to the former objections, may fitly serve for them: Namely, that all being teachable, and ready to hear what the Lord hath to say to them, may serve God daily by walking diligently in their calling, and minding their work whiles they be about it: so as they remember and keep this in firm persuasion, that they labor and take pain therein, because it pleaseth God they should do so: and withal, that they be watchful to practice in their labors, all virtues, and bring forth the fruits of the spirit, as occasion shall be offered; that is to say, patience, when they be provoked to the contrary, with long sufferance, meekness and humbleness to hold under their proud, boisterous and rebellious hearts; and contentation in the blessing and success that God giveth them, with the like; as faith, hope, love, peace, &c.

To be short, every true Christian may as he ought, keep a daily course of living holily, righteously and soberly, though not all in a like measure and degree, yet so, as God may be pleased, his own heart quieted, and others by his example not justly offended, but edified: which is the thing that we ought all to propound to ourselves, and aim at. And last of all, whereas it may be demanded, what sick persons shall do, and whether their consciences shall be tied to such rules, when pains and diseases give no liberty to the mind to think of anything but the greatness and extremity thereof; and when prayer itself, especially long continued, cannot be admitted, no not of them who have yet in their health prayed oft and fervently, and with delight: to them I answer; That if the diseases and kinds of pain be such, (as there are many such) then know we that the direction fit for such, is to keep faith, hope, peace with God, and patience, with meekness and thankfulness: to watch for this, and lift up the heart as oft (though briefly) as they can, by prayer for this grace, and to hold out contrary rebellion (even as the martyrs did in their extremities) the Lord having promised that he will lay no more upon them, then

they shall be able to bear: and yet even this poor watch keeping (for so it will seem to them) shall be a practicing of that direction daily, which I have made mention of, though it is not to be looked for, that the sick and diseased can afford that liberal service to God, that others may, who are in health. As for those who are distracted and bereaved of their senses and understanding, (which may be the case of the dearest servants of God) there is no question to be moved about them: In the faith wherein they lived, they shall die and be accepted. And for other, whose sickness and diseases shall not be so painful as theirs before mentioned, they besides that which hath been prescribed to the other, are to take the benefit of reading by the help of others, with conference, and of meditation also, and more long continued prayers. Which grace with that which is meet for every other in his estate, God, who giveth plentifully and casteth none in the teeth, vouchsafe to grant to all that desire it, for his sake in whom he is well pleased, Jesus Christ the righteous.

## **CHAP. 10.**

The conclusion of the whole Book: containing an exhortation to good and bad.

And thus much I have thought good to say of the doubts, objections and cavils which may be raised from or by occasion of the former doctrine, as also of the answers thereto. And now to shut up this Treatise and the whole Book, for conclusion, a few words in the way of exhortation I add both to the godly and godless: and so I end. To them I say this: Seeing you have some experience already, that it is no lost labor to live under gods protection and government, but that in serving him devoutly there is great reward, beware ye wax not slack and cold in the course wherein ye have begun. And such of you,

as have known this point of truth, and made conscience of the same to practice it, I mean every day, and throughout the same, to set yourselves to walk with God, (which many and those also well minded have not done,) hold on your course and be not weary of well doing; for ye shall reap the fruit thereof without weariness: ye have borne the greatest brunt already, while living among many Atheists, papists and carnal Gospellers, ye have received their livery and censure, and with all disgrace that might be, (under the Gospel) have reproachfully had the odious names of Precisians and Puritans, Hypocrites and seditious persons, given unto you: but if taunts, mocks, reproaches and discouragements have not turned you out of the way, nor caused you to wax faint in your Christian course, neither let any other thing hereafter unsettle you, but hold out the confidence of your faith, and rejoicing of your hope unto the end: and so doing, I pray God, that ye may prosper and fare well, as your souls shall prosper.

And whatsoever knowledge of gods will ye have found by diligent seeking of it, and hidden the same in your hearts, as treasure in the safest place, to the end ye might not so much as wander from God's commandments, praising him for the same; yet pray still to God, as the blessed of the Lord have done, O teach us still thy statutes: and grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The blind world seeth not the happy end of that to you, which seemeth to them to be the greatest misery, whiles ye arm and settle yourselves to walk on constantly in the course ye have begun. And God knoweth whether he hath given that grace unto you, to a further end then they once think of: that is to say, that when they shall see God to bless you therein, many of them which are as yet of the synagogue of Satan, which call themselves Jews, and are not, but do lie, may come and worship before your feet, and know that he hath loved you: yea, it may come to pass, that when they shall after better and more mature

deliberation, see and be constrained to say, God is with you of a truth, that ten of them may take one of you by the skirt and say: We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you: Nay it is certain, that your light so shining as hath been said, many shall see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. More I will not say to you.

But to proceed: such of you as have not extended your care of living godly to every day nor throughout the same; but have taken more liberty to yourselves than God alloweth, this I say to all such: If you have done so through ignorance, and that God hath revealed no further light unto you, who yet were ready to do whatsoever you should hear to be commanded you of him; be not discouraged, your sin hath been the lesser, and God will not impute it to you, nor lay it to your charge. Only show that ye did it ignorantly, hereby, that now ye know God requireth it of you, that your care should continue one day as well as another to look to your lives and particularly to observe them, that now (I say) ye do so, and follow conscionably that, which ye see to be your duty, as ye did before in that which he knew. And so join yourselves in your practice with your brethren before mentioned: and all that is said to them, take it as spoken unto you. But to others of you, who fear God and know it to be your duty to make conscience of your ways one day as well as another, and yet did it not; or if you were ignorant of it, yet ye made no hast to know more than ye did, lest ye should answer for more than ye were willing to do: the sin of both sorts of you is great, and doth cry to God for punishing it, and he hath hard the cry of it against you, and hath a controversy with you for it; as he said in the same case to the church of Ephesus, (though yet God was worshipped truly of it, but not indeed with zeal, and fervently) I have somewhat against thee. And that which Saint John said to them, I say unto you: Remember from

whence ye are fallen, and repent, and do your former works, or else God will come against you shortly.

For indeed it is not meet, that such as at the first enlightening of them by faith through the preaching of the gospel, could not satisfy themselves in being thankful to God for their deliverance which they saw: should after, make a common matter of God's love, and leave their fervency in honoring him, and their first love to him, which they thought sometime could never be enough. And therefore it is not to be doubted, but that such have many complaining's of their looseness and security, and many accusing's of themselves, when they smart for such negligence and boldness in sinning against God, by such corrections as he doth inflict upon them. And to omit all other (for there is now no time to mention many) even this is one: that whereas many of them, who while they walked uprightly, walked safely, yet since they waxed more weary of God's service, they were driven many times to contrary straits, complaining that they could not find the comforts in God's word and promises, which they were wont to enjoy. And who doubteth, but that it must needs be so? For although some take discomfort without any just cause, either when they cannot do the good they would, or when God's hand is upon them by some sore afflictions; in which cases their grief ought not to exceed: yet that it doth so, when men walk not soundly with God, and follow not that which they know they should, what marvel is it?

It is their wisdom for both to amend, and that speedily: the one, his error, that he knew not; but both of them, their careless half-serving of God which they had offered him, and to bring themselves to this, that they hold and account it their greatest work they have to do, and the chiefest care, that they be afraid to offend continually and every day: yea and for this cause, that even their rejoicings be in trembling. This is that, which they must endeavor after. And to conclude my

speech to them, let this that I say be regarded the more, by how much they are in greater danger of the devils deceivable allurements, which now in this our renewed peace and longer hope of the continuance of it, they lie open unto. Seeing it will be plausible, not only to the bad, but also to the better sort, that now we have escaped the peril which we feared when the years of our late deceased Sovereign the Queens Majesty grew full, and therefore not like long to continue: now (I say) we having obtained of the Lord this mercy, to have a religious and godly king to sit upon the throne, and to defend us, it will seem a needless matter to look so narrowly to ourselves as then we did. But let all such know (howsoever others have no ears to hear it) that if, now our fear of earthly danger is taken away in some sort, we increase not and double our fear of offending God; and also if with more enlarged hearts we set not ourselves daily (as we have good cause) to testify our thanksgiving, by all possible fruits thereof, with honest and blameless conversation: I do them to understand, that the last end of these blessed times will be worse to them, then the beginnings of them were, when they had not yet so deeply sinned: And it will be verified in them, which was spoken in the days of the prophet Amos to the children of Israel: You only have I known of all the families of the earth, and therefore I will visit you for all your iniquities.

Now I have spoken to the Godly, I turn to the other, who either have only a false persuasion of their salvation; or else, confess that they have no knowledge what shall become of them after this life. Both sorts are earnestly to be desired, to consider in what fearful estate they be, who having not made so much as a beginning in the practice of a godly life (for so it may truly be said, if they have not true and unfeigned faith) are far off from this daily walking with God, which I have showed to be required by him of all his faithful servants. They are also to weigh, how they can answer this saying of the Lord Jesus:

Except ye repent, ye shall all perish: And that of Saint Peter: If the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the wicked and ungodly appear? For besides that their estate shall be in the world to come, easeless and remediless, what is it that they desire here, for the which they can be content to debar themselves of the blessed immortality of the soul, and the glorious resurrection of the body, and to go to the place of torment? Do they not see the slippery and uncertain condition of all things here below? And that they cannot promise themselves continuance in one estate till the next morning? And that they are (whatsoever they imagine) without God in the world, the vilest of all creatures, the most cursed, except the devils, and yet devils incarnate themselves? And if they think they may repent when they will, (beside that late repentance is dangerous, if they might attain to it) do they not see, that they shut up the way thereto from themselves, whiles they may hear the lord speaking thus to them: Because when I called upon you, ye would not hear, you shall cry yourselves, and I will not hear saith the Lord? And if they should persuade themselves, that their sins are not so great: what is more ridiculous? And what should I say more? For if it were but the depriving themselves of the infinite good things which are to be enjoyed even in this life, they are worthily to be reprov'd and challenged by that speech of Solomon, O ye fools, how long will ye love foolishness, and ye scorers delight in scorning, and ye unwise hate wisdom?

And as great folly it is, to hope that punishments and fearful and troublesome times here, shall pass as they have done, even like unto a shower of rain. But as Noah told the people of the old world, that when God meant to bring the flood that should cover the earth, it should rain without intermission forty days and forty nights; which the people thought would not have been so, but it did come to pass: even so, when God will bring their destruction, it shall come swiftly



as a whirlwind, and consume them utterly, as the fire doth the stubble, before it make an end. And as Nebuchadnezzar had twelve months granted him to repent in, but at the end of them, when he went forward in his sin, even while he was priding himself in his great Babel, the same hour he heard God's sentence on him, and had it executed; that he was driven from men, and did eat grass as the oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown as eagles feathers, and his nails as birds claws: so God will surely come and not delay, at his appointed time, and do as he hath said, to the sons of men who are workers of iniquity, and they shall not escape: and in the mean season their damnation sleepeth not.

And why will God deal thus with them? Verily because they by continuing in their sin, put him in mind of the judgment threatened against them, to execute it: whereas a man would think, that so many examples both in scripture and in their own experience, wherein they have seen the fearful execution of his threatening's after men's sin hath grown to ripeness, should drive them to prevent their own destruction. And as none are without warnings one time or other, and those also fearful ones for the time, by sickness, diseases, fear of death, wounded consciences and other such accusations: so a man would think, in the time wherein they are sent, that they would remember such warnings while they live, and never forget them: but like a wonder that lasteth but nine days, so is there repentance, which vanisheth away as the dew of the morning by the heat of the day. I would have thought myself, that many monstrous persons whom I have visited, when God's wrath upon them caused them to cry out, and promise amendment, would have proved rare examples to others, of true conversion to God; but to my great grief, and to teach me experience what becometh of such untimely fruits they have turned back again, as an arrow from the stone wall, and as the dog to his own vomit: which causeth me to write that, which I have

often uttered with an heavy heart, That we had need to have the doctrine of repentance offer then anything else, for that sin being rooted sticketh so fast. If we be warned of anything but sin, one warning will serve: but many hundred sermons cannot purge that out. For when they hear that which sometime casteth them down, yet as though they had been beside themselves while they were in such good moods, they come to themselves again, that is, to their old course, and say: Shall we forgo our pleasant life, our merry company, our brave stomachs which make us famous, and to be spoken of? Yea the meanest have somewhat to hold themselves in, as it were in chains, that they may not return to God lest he should save them.

But now I have showed them their estate, even their shame, and the woe which they are in, and what variety of spiritual and heavenly delights they have forgone by refusing to walk within the compass of Christian duty from day today, (which sweetness of holy delights God giveth his servants as a taste of heaven in this life) what remaineth but this: that all (which will not show themselves desperate, and willfully to seek their own confusion) consider this, though they have long forgot God, and lay it to heart: namely, that they say with the apostles everyone severally, when Christ their master told them that one among the rest should betray him: Is it I master? and with Paul, when he was smitten down at the gates of Damascus: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Yea and let them do as the servants of Benhadad: when they were in great fear of their lives by the king of Israel, They put halters about their necks, and came and humbled themselves before him, and said they were his servants, to the end they might find favor at his hands: Thus (I say) let them seek the Lord while he may be found, and say: Spare thy people, O Lord, and be no longer angry with the sheep of thy pasture. But let them do it in truth, till the promises of God be believed of them, and applied to them, piercing to the heart, and taking hold of the affections, so that

they may see themselves to be of the number of God's people, and to go beyond all reprobates; and till the same word of God which they have heard preached, having been the seed of salvation to them, may be the mold of their conversation also, which they being cast into, may be fashioned after the doctrine of it: And the rather, for the renewed peace and defense of the gospel, by the happy succession of our most gracious Sovereign the kings Majesty, as well as the hope we have for the time to come, of living safely under our vine and figtree: lest if they serve not the Lord with joy and a good heart for all such good things, they do procure such plagues, as shall manifestly show that he is angry with them. Now to shut up all: if it be said to me, that I have showed, how men may live happily, but nothing hath been said about happy dying; be this for answer: An happy life bringeth an answerable death, and the learning and accustoming of ourselves to die and contemn the world while we live, shall lead us the way to eternal and blessed life when we must die. For that knowledge, faith, hope and other grace is to uphold and guide us at death, which was the staff and stay of us in our life: which God shed plentifully into our hearts both in our life, and at our death, to make us blessed in both. And of this Treatise, and of the whole book thus much.

## **A SWEET MEDITATION OF THE AUTHORS,**

(LONG AGO) OF THE BENEFIT OF READING, CONFERENCE,  
MUSING ON HOLY THINGS, AND PRAYER: CONTAINING A  
COMPLAINT, THAT THESE HOLY EXERCISES ARE NEGLECTED  
FOR THAT WHICH IS WORSE THAN NOTHING, EVEN MEN'S  
SINFUL WILL.

1

OH, what a blessed thing it is  
with godly learned to talk,  
By reading and by conference,  
both as we sit and walk!

2

And oft to think upon the joy  
by God for his prepared,  
And eke to pray with groans to him!  
the like hath not been hard.

3

It doth revive our hearts most dull,  
and bring our minds in frame:  
It doth indue our souls with light,  
made fit to praise God's name.

4

It causeth us our time to spend  
in fruit, and heavenly sort:

It keeps from every evil way,  
and so from ill report.

5

It holds our minds from earthly thoughts  
and vanities most vain:

It doth become pleasant and sweet,  
instead of irksome pain.

6

By this, ill tidings are not feared,  
afflictions are not heard:

But from impatience and ire,  
hereby we are preserv'd.

7

By meditation and reading,  
with prayer annexed thereto,  
We make our gain of that which we  
are loath once to forgo.

8

It maketh us a savor sweet  
in places where we come;  
That some are gained to God thereby,  
and folly hath no room.

9

Blessed is he whose portion this,  
instead of toile is given  
Whereby some cannot read a line  
from morning unto even.

10

And as his lot in fairer ground  
is cast whom this behighteth,  
In reading and in study sweet  
that joyfully delighteth:

11

So he that seeth not this grace  
and privilege most great,  
Sorrow and shame shall him pursue,

and folly be his meat.

12

I speak of those whose calling is

by learning for to live:

Whom God would have be free from world,

and good example give.

13

And so of everyone, as he

hath liberty and leave,

That he do not for fond delight,

himself hereof bereave.

14

But Lord, what grief it is to think

that this so happy a lot

Should be trod down, as pearls of swine,

of many a drunken sot!

15

That this deceitful merchandise

of profit and of gain,  
Should darken so and blind men's eyes,  
that they should loath this pain:

16

That some should dream of honor high,  
and of promotion, so  
That this sweet state with all her fruits,  
they should gladly forgo:

17

That neither Scripture given by God,  
nor books by learned made,  
Can cause them be in love with them,  
and so forsake their trade.

18

Indeed it doth require the heart  
from evil to be brought,  
That lovers of pleasures more than God,  
may come to better thought:



19

I mean, that they may sin abhor  
of every loathsome kind:

And that their chiefest joy may be,  
from thence to wean their mind:

19

And with no less delight of heart  
they wisdom may embrace,  
Till godliness hath got in them  
a room and settled place.

20

Such shall it find a pleasure sweet,  
their years and time to spend  
In authors holy and divine,  
until their life do end.

21

And such therefore may be full sure  
the forenam'd fruits to reap:

And to enjoy all good delights,  
in measure and in heap.

22

If any think this too great toyle,  
and state of life to hard:

Let him again think, that full great  
and sweet is the reward.

23

As for myself, with Solomon  
this one thing I may say:

That I have had experience  
Of many a happy day:

24

Such as deceitful world doth yield  
to such as it embrace;

Yet never saw I pleasure like  
unto this heavenly grace.

25

What did I say, Not like to it?

no, nor to be compared:

For one it yieldeth twenty-fold

in pleasure and reward.

26

And lest I should be thought to say

(like to the Poets vain)

More then the truth in praise thereof,

and so should seem to fain:

27

Full many a thousand, even of them

who have their time ill spent,

And unto vain delights their years

and all their strength have lent:

28

And have not chose the better part

in wisdom for to grow;

Have cried out fearfully at length,

and said: It hath been so.

29

All pleasure, Folly they did call,

which heretofore they found:

And sorrow'd, that they had no part

in that which was most sound.

30

They have cried out of idle life

and of their youth misspent:

That to the reading of good books

their hearts they have not bent.

31

For what though men should set themselves

to seek a pleasant life:

In all things, ease and peace to find,

and to be void of strife?

32.

Full true it is, that without this

their pleasure is but pain:

Right soon it shall depart from them  
and sorrow come again.

33

Where are the mighty and the proud  
and flanting ones become?

Some 100 years agoe they died,  
and such as had their room.

34

The rolls of kings and princes great  
and chronicles of late,

Record to us full many a one  
who lived in pomp and state.

35

A time they had, their time is gone,  
their glory is decayed:

And sin to such as died not well,  
a woeful hire is paid.

36

And as for men of lower place,  
whom better we did know,  
Whose crown was beauty, ease and wealth  
and did in dainties flow:

37

Behold it is with them, as if  
they never here had been,  
As if no pleasure or no pomp  
of theirs had once been seen.

38

And such as do remain as yet,  
and live as they have done,  
Shalt find the same which they have found  
when once their race is run.

39

So that small cause there is, we see,  
this kind of life to choose,

And for the same the savor sweet  
of heavenly life to lose.

40

But such as do in wisdom joy  
and take delight therein,  
Shall have with peace a place on earth  
and greater gain shall win.

41

Therefore mine own desire shall be,  
to take this for my part,  
The water streams and pastures sweet  
of God's word, with my heart.

42

And such as these few reasons may  
persuade unto the same,  
I wish them that which to myself:  
at this that they may aim.

43

Then happy we throughout our life

what ever us befall:

Thrice happy eke, when we go hence

and God us home shall call.

44

Let the words of my mouth please thee

and thoughts of heart, O God:

And in the same continually

let me make mine abode.

45

As have the days of sorrow been,

so may our comfort be:

That as we did not praise thee then,

so may we now praise thee.

FINIS



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ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions October 2023. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn Or 97068