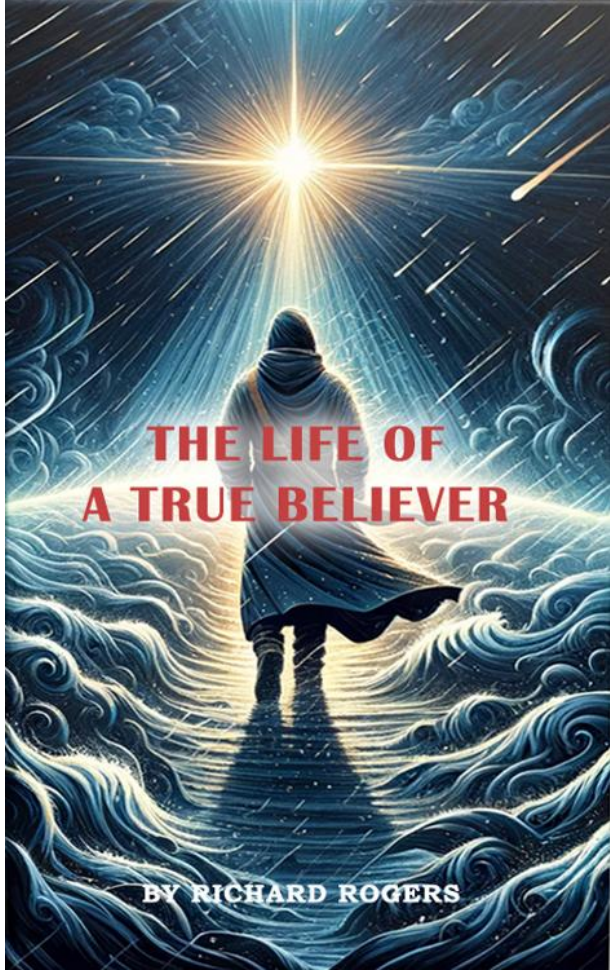


A person wearing a white hooded robe is seen from behind, walking through a turbulent sea of dark blue and white waves. The person is walking towards a bright, glowing light source at the top center of the frame, which radiates outwards in a starburst pattern. The sky is dark and filled with numerous streaks of light, resembling a starry night sky or a stormy atmosphere. The overall mood is one of hope and perseverance.

**THE LIFE OF
A TRUE BELIEVER**

BY RICHARD ROGERS



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and the conversation of such as have assured hope of salvation.

PENNED BY RICHARD ROGERS,

PREACHER OF the word of God at Wethersfield in Essex.

The Second of Seven Treatises

DEVT. 33. verse. 12. The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety
with him, who protecteth him all the day long.

PSAL. 84. verse. 10. One day in thy Courts is better than a thousand
others elsewhere.

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.

Table of Contents

[Chap. 1. The sum and order of this second Treatise.](#)

[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.](#)

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 threatenings in the word of God, as well as faith to be saved.

Chap. 4. Of the heart, and how it should be cleansed and changed, and so the whole man, which is sanctification, tending to repentance and a godly life. Chap.

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

Chap. 6. Of the diverse kinds of evil to be renounced, and namely of inward against God and men.

Chap. 7. Of other evils and sins, most properly concerning ourselves.

Chap. 8. How the minds and hearts of the believers are taken up usually, seeing they renounce inward lusts.

Chap. 9. Of the second kind of evils or sins to be renounced, namely outward.

Chap. 10. Of four sorts of such as hope for salvation; and yet renounce not open sins, and outward offenses.

Chap. 11. Of certain objections raised from the former doctrine, and answers thereto: as why we should put difference betwixt men: whether the godly may fall reproachfully, and what infirmities they may have.

Chap. 12. Of the keeping of the heart once purged, in that good plight afterward.

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.

Chap. 14. Of the answering of some objections about the former doctrine, and of the other two virtues which help to a godly life.

Chap. 15. Of some particular duties pertaining to God directly in the first, second, third, and fourth commandments.

Chap. 16. Of certain duties to men, in the fifth, sixth, and seventh commandment, the obeying whereof is a part of a godly life.

Chap. 17. Of some duties to men in the 8, 9, and 10. commandments.

Chap. 18. Of certain reasons persuading to the practice of a godly life: which is the fourth general part of this treatise.

Chap. 19. Of answers to objections brought against the necessity of practicing this godly life. Chap. 20. The last objection against the godly life answered.

Chap. 20: The last objection against the godly life answered.

CHAP. 1.

The Sum and Order of this Second Treatise.

Hitherto I have shown who they are whom the Scripture calls believers, and the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Now, it is necessary, and follows in order, to show what the life of the true believer is and how he who has faith must behave himself throughout his whole conversation, for as yet nothing has been said of that. But that treatise, namely, what the life of the true believer is, was reserved for this place to avoid confusion, and without it, a man could neither well see the excellency and beauty of faith, which without works is dead, nor could the believer know how to occupy himself throughout his life, but must of necessity be idle and unprofitable, yet must join with his faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love, etc.

This, I say, is the argument and matter to be handled in this treatise. And since there is much difficulty about this point, as about the other in the former treatise, and since it is of the greatest weight and moment of all others except that, it must be looked into and laid forth with like care. For some think that repentance and godliness are 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, who 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 indeed, but so might Ahab have been godly. Some, if they can shut up all their vain talk, bad dealings, foolish jestings, 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 are 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 of 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 so that we may not be deceived.

My purpose, therefore, in this treatise is to set down at large what a godly life is and wherein it consists so that he who desires it may see whether his course and behavior are such or not. The trial of this must be made of him who has tried himself by the former, so that one may be seen to go with the other, and both together as twins, so that he who has not both may be truly said to have neither.

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 is that a godly life must of necessity go with the faith spoken of before, and that it is the foundation and ground thereof, by which we receive and give credit, not only to the promise of our salvation but also to all other promises of temporary benefits pertaining 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 is that there must be a pure heart in him who must lead a godly life, a pure heart, renewed and changed from what it was before, as Ezekiel speaks: "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, the whole man must 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.

Fourthly, I will add the other part of godliness, declaring that it consists in a full purpose of the heart and a true endeavor of life to obey God in all things, even unto the end. By this, one may also gather a short description of this life of the believer: it is such a conversation that, being grounded on faith in a sanctified person, renounces all evil and practices good duties, though weakly, yet constantly afterward.

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 that might withhold and hinder from it.

All of these considered, it shall not be hard for him who will learn to understand plainly and clearly what the life of the believer is and withal whether he who professes himself to have true faith is also reformed in his life and conversation, and how he may be so. So although there be many measures of grace, and some are in many degrees before others in this state and condition of living godly, yet everyone in whom these things shall be found may prove himself godly, however he may lack somewhat that many others have.

And of the sum and order of this treatise in general, thus much is 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 shown what the sum of this treatise is and the order and parts of it, I will now proceed. First, since I have taken in hand to describe the life of the believer and what the godly life is that he must lead, I will endeavor myself to help and direct him herein, as God has enabled me. In this way, just 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, seeing godliness cannot be without justifying faith, but springs and arises from it, like the branch from the tree. For as Saint James says, "Show me your faith by your works," therefore where there is no true justifying faith, there can be no godly life. So, he who is not a true believer cannot have any spark of godliness in him but is utterly destitute and void thereof, even altogether ungodly, as the Apostle writes: "We all had our conversation sometime as other disobedient men, in the lusts of our flesh, doing those things which pleased us." Here, 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 (Ephesians 2:8). But lest anyone, through ignorance, might say that though they did what pleased the lusts of their hearts, they did not only do so, and not all that they did was such, but some good they did amongst the evil they committed (thinking that one may answer for the other), I further say to them, out of the passage in Titus 1:15: "Unto the pure, all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled

and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but even their minds and consciences are defiled." To the Hebrews, it is clear that without faith, it is impossible to please God, regardless of whatever things we do. Everything is abominable, odious, and vile before Him. As is the fountain, so are the rivers that run from it, and as is the heart and the thoughts of it, so are the actions that proceed from it. However, the thoughts of the heart are always and only evil. So, in the unbeliever, there is no good thing that pleases God. Their best actions are turned into sin, including prayers, alms, reading, hearing, confessions, thanksgivings, and whatever else. All of these are abominable in them, and God will never be pleased with their works and services until the person, namely, even themselves, is accepted by Him, and that does not happen until they believe. This is stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews 10:38: "The just shall live by faith, but if anyone withdraws himself [that is, through unbelief], my soul shall have no pleasure in him," says the Lord.

And this is the work that God requires of him, above and beyond all works: that he believes in His Son, who has already accomplished his salvation. Therefore, he shall be saved by Him alone. Now, if a man, before he has some sure tokens of God's love, and consequently some measure of true faith, cannot even enter into a godly life, nor have anything that he does approved by God (as we have seen, and the Scriptures more fully prove), how dangerously do many thousands deceive themselves? Some are verily persuaded that they love, fear, and serve God, not knowing what faith is. Others think they have truly repented because they have mourned and been sorry for their sins at some time, yet they have no faith or any constant desire for it. And still, others, because they do many good things in their own nature, imagine themselves to live godly, when a man may do many good actions, and yet they shall not be good for him as long as faith, the principal thing, is lacking in him, as has been said.

If anyone finds this doctrine hard and says that if it were true, it would drive many to discomfort, even desperation, let them know that if anyone despairs because their wicked lives are condemned by God, the doctrine is not to be blamed, but the persons themselves who should rather repent. For this doctrine is the doctrine of the Scriptures, and all sound Divines, both old and new, have taught it. If it is hard, it is hard to the ignorant, unstable, and obstinate, who indeed can take little comfort in it and pervert all things to their own destruction. Although they may not despair, their condition will be no better in the end than desperate if they continue in their ways. But the truth of God may not be buried for men's stubbornness, who cannot accept it.

Let this suffice to show that no man can lead a godly and Christian life before he has some measure of true faith, as it has been set down and described in the former treatise. Just as I have shown that no man lives godly without believing, it should also be noted that no man who believes, nurtures, and preserves his faith can live wickedly. They cannot conform themselves to the ways of the world, return to the offensive and unsavory course they walked before. Instead, they are new-born and become new creatures. While they may falter at the beginning of their conversion or in times of temptation, they know themselves to be among those who will be saved, and their love constrains them to honor the One who will save them.

Although this is most true and will be accepted by the majority, many content themselves by merely affirming it. Some go about it in a general manner, thinking that any little would suffice to honor God and show forth the fruits of faith. It is essential to set down some special proofs of it that cannot be easily refuted.

First, consider the passage in Titus: "The grace of God that has appeared teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live holily, righteously, and soberly in this present life." It plainly says that if we are enlightened by the divine grace and the gift of the Gospel to see ourselves as partakers of salvation, we are also taught and learn to renounce our old ways. Just as a scholar taught by his master becomes skillful in the points of instruction, a person who knows they are delivered forever from dreadful damnation is compelled to change their wicked life, which displeased God, and is ready to do the same. Do not be deceived; God is not mocked by those who profess to seek salvation but do not bring forth fruitworthy amendment.

It is not a mere wandering desire to please God that this precious faith and assurance of salvation produce. It also shapes the man and teaches him, in some true and acceptable measure, to go about it. The tidings of this treasure appeared so glorious to Agrippa, a King, and therefore acquainted with earthly felicity, and a Heathen, and therefore unfit to easily see into spiritual things. Yet, when he heard it from Paul, not preaching in the pulpit but standing as a prisoner at the bar, it caused him to say at first, "Thou hast almost persuaded me to become a Christian." Therefore, for one who has not only heard the sound of this heavenly news with his ears (which, in a Heathen's judgment, weighed equally against a Prince's kingdom) but has believed it to be his own and that forever, do we think that anything will be considered too dear for him, who has been freely given it?

So when I see one cursed man rail against the doctrine of God's word and His faithful servants, and another who loves the Christian life but only outwardly, and various people bewitched in different ways, yet all of them loving darkness more than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19), I am not surprised. They act according to their

nature and kind. Since they are not obedient to the will of God, they cannot truly be obedient. However, they do not see any reason to accuse themselves. But if they could see the kindness God offers them, even the opportunity to be made happy, and believe it, they would be changed as dramatically as Saul, who went from being a persecutor to becoming a preacher. They would go from being oppressors to being merciful individuals, restorers of ill-gotten gains, and from being profane to being holy. They would be converted in such a way that we could say of them, compared to the best servants of God, "the lamb and the lion shall eat together."

But to let those who are too gross go, I wish those who take no "no" but believe they belong to God's election to consider these Scriptures. Their goodness is like the morning dew, soon vanishing and blown away or like a cake half-baked. Let them see how well this suits them, being sometimes forward and sometimes backward, zealous in some things and yielding to the will of God, but sinning against their own knowledge in others. When they stray from duty, they make no haste to return to it and do not see anything amiss in themselves. They cannot bear to be reminded and reproved, even when it is justly and kindly done. They cannot be denied that they believe and are sure to be saved. But where is the spirit S. Paul speaks of in those who know they are saved? The spirit that rules and bears sway, that commands holy and heavenly motions and affections into the heart, and does not allow poisoned and earthly corruptions to defile it. Where is the 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, like children? And where are the comely ornaments, beautiful to adorn and set out their lives? Instead, a professor of the Gospel may not be able to deny that their heart is corrupt, filled with fretting, raging, and unquietness over every small trifle, yet they do not tremble for it or say, "What have I

done?" They may be loose, vain, and foolish due to other occasions, all without repentance. Where is their testimony that their heart is a good treasury and nursery of good things, when their tongue walks not only unnecessarily and idly but in unsavory and offensive speech? They engage in foolish jesting, taunting, railing, mocking, lying, swearing, slandering, curish and churlish speaking. How are the powers and members of the body in subjection, like a wife to the power of Christ, who rules as a husband in the hearts of God's beloved ones? Where is the religion of those men, which S. James boldly says is nonexistent when the tongue is so ungoverned, regardless of appearances?

I could go on to convict many of our countrymen who have often heard me and other Ministers of God urge them in the same way in our Sermons. I know, and say it with grief, that all those who have such things reigning in them are not only their own enemies but also enemies to our preaching of the Gospel of Christ. Their rejoicing in their faith and hope is not good when they are so earthly and carnally minded.

They must know, regardless of their belief, that God has joined virtue and godliness with faith, patience, and temperance. Whoever believes is thereby turned from their old ways. Personally, I have long disliked the hasty and sudden displays of great repentance in individuals who, upon their first exposure to the preached word, not only profess that they have repented (when, apart from some fleeting pangs of grief, they do not truly understand what repentance means) but also think themselves almost immediately capable of passing judgment on others and teaching them. I am not speaking of those who are genuinely humbled in their hearts for their sins and desire nothing more than to be set free from the fear that oppresses them, learning daily to believe and be grounded in it. They dare not believe

their sins forgiven unless they walk humbly before God and others. Instead, I am speaking of those who move from sorrow for sin, without faith, to what they imagine is a new way of life that they can quickly attain. They leave behind the pursuit of faith and the assurance of God's favor, which is the beginning and catalyst of all new life, as something easily obtained. Consequently, they make little effort to acquire it and, for lack of thorough examination to determine whether they possess it, many are eventually compelled to seek it again, many years after initially believing they had attained it. What stands to sound reason is that beginners in any trade should not immediately become masters and establish themselves, or that they should rule well when they have never learned to obey. In the same vein, it is not in line with religion for individuals to regard themselves as good Christians or to be such in reality when they have not experienced Christ and the benefits thereof. They have not truly learned Him, who is the truth, in such a way as to put off the old man with his affections and lusts and to put on the new. They have not felt His goodness and generosity to the extent that, for His sake, they are willing to do anything.

I have mentioned this in the context of the current topic: that faith always brings new life with it. Even when faith is overwhelmed by fleshly corruption, it stirs sighs and struggles in the heart until it is subdued. I aim to persuade some of my brethren not to deceive themselves into thinking they have faith when their lives are filled not only with many offensive actions but also with habitual and common transgressions. For one who bears the title of God's servant must be recognized by the mark of an uncorrupted life, demonstrating by their aroma and manner of living that they come from God and are not of the world. They must indeed prove themselves to be true men of God. Their roots must be firmly anchored like the trees of Lebanon; they must flourish like the lily,

and find God's graces like dew to revitalize them. We can be certain that, despite any claims people may make, if their lives do not reflect the mold and imprint of sound doctrine, and yet they insist on being recognized as approved servants of God, they are under a powerful delusion.

Therefore, since the Scripture has so fully and frequently presented this truth to us, that those who have received God's mercy are taught and guided by Him, should not people adopt a different course than the one they previously followed, now that they have been delivered from such great bondage? They were delivered for this purpose, as they have heard. So, if anyone is assured of salvation, let them willingly submit to the Lord's yoke, meaning His commandments, and commit their entire life to Him for guidance, diligently engaging in good works. Alternatively, they should remain silent, for in truth they are far from it, as will become evident in time, as it already has for many such individuals, to their detriment. They should rest assured that God will not hesitate to avenge such audacity. To summarize this matter in one sentence, Saint Paul vividly describes the life that those certain of God's favor are to lead in Ephesians, saying, "Put off, or lay aside, your former way of life, that is, your corrupt nature, and also the inclinations of your mind and body, which were tainted with deceptive lusts. Be renewed in the spirit of your minds, even in the place where reason should exert the greatest influence, so that you may put on the new man to be sanctified, with the powers of your bodies and minds being renewed and transformed as well. In this way, you will be molded to produce righteousness and true holiness, thereby bearing some resemblance to 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 threatenings in the word of God, as well as faith to be saved.

Now that I have established that true justifying faith and a godly life must necessarily go hand in hand, and that one cannot exist without the other, I will address the second point in this first general section. I will prove that it is essential to lead a godly life to believe and give credence to the entire doctrine of the Word of God, to be led and guided by it, just as one has faith in the promises of salvation and forgiveness of sins. Therefore, I assert that a person who believes in Christ for salvation should not simply rest in that belief as if Christ were given to us by His Father solely to be our righteousness and to provide us with a path to eternal life. Rather, Christ is also our wisdom, making us wise; our sanctification, making us holy; and our redemption and deliverance, ultimately rescuing us from all the calamities and miseries that befall us in His good time. Those who truly believe in Him must be persuaded of this. They must believe that all the promises, both for this life and the life to come, which serve to encourage obedience, whether they are great and fundamental, such as the promises of spiritual graces, or smaller, such as promises of bodily safety and protection from dangers insofar as they are good for us, belong to them.

Furthermore, they must believe that all the commandments that instruct obedience, as well as the threats because they deter disobedience, are set forth for their benefit as well as for anyone else,

binding their conscience accordingly. They must believe this in accordance with Saint Paul's words: "Whatever things were written aforetime" – be they promises, threats, or commandments – "they were written for our learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, we might have hope." Therefore, they are obligated to rely on the Word of God as written in the canonical Scriptures and to build their faith upon it to the extent that they are willing to stake their souls on the truth and doctrine contained within it. They should consider anything that contradicts or conflicts with this Word, whether in their hearts or actions, as sin.

Though all who hope to be saved should indeed do this, it is evident that they do not. Many do not have a conscience about numerous sins, they do not pay attention to many promises, and they do not fear many threats. All of these factors testify against them, indicating that they are not as well fortified as they could be. Consequently, they hold even the promise of salvation itself with less strength. This common occurrence is largely due to the fact that these most important and excellent matters are not thoroughly and clearly instilled in the people. They must be repeatedly taught until those who are willing to receive them have truly made them their own. Another contributing factor is that people who have some understanding of this doctrine, specifically how to align good living with their faith, often do not make the effort to remember and internalize these teachings. They possess fragments of many good points but rarely do they see anyone among them fully grasping and applying what I am now discussing. It is uncommon for one Christian among many to achieve this through teaching, let alone to put it into practice, which involves giving equal credence to all parts of the Word rather than cherry-picking what suits one's preferences.

Hence, when some of them have the initial spark of true faith within them, they still struggle to understand how to embark on repentance and a godly life. They are uncertain about how to begin and proceed, vacillating between being resolute and hesitant, rarely remaining steadfast. While much of this is due to their own weakness, it is also a result of their ignorance, particularly among the more enlightened and spiritually attuned individuals. If they were convinced that they should have a conscientious approach to all sound doctrines they encounter and wholeheartedly accept every aspect of the Word of God, submitting themselves to it, including promises, threats, and commandments, they would hold a firmer conviction of their salvation. Additionally, they would be better equipped to avoid evil, fulfill their duties, and place trust in God concerning all of His promises.

This is why the Epistle to the Hebrews states: "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Similarly, it is written that "without faith, it is impossible to please God." This aligns with the statement made by Saint Paul to the Romans: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," signifying that anything done without a firm conviction in our consciences that it pleases God is a transgression against Him. Therefore, when our understanding is not grounded in this doctrine and truth, and consequently, our actions lack a guiding rule, we are bound to wander aimlessly and laboriously. Even at our best, we will be plagued by doubt and uncertainty regarding whether we are pleasing God or not. Our primary concern should be to avoid anything that might weaken or undermine our faith, especially when it is fragile and vulnerable, akin to a bruised reed that can be easily broken.

Therefore, if anyone believes in their salvation, let them also believe that they shall be sanctified (for we believe both with one and the same faith). They should trust that they will receive grace from God to produce the fruits of a reformed life. By hearing the holy Scriptures, they will be empowered by Him to cast off their former way of life. This faith greatly benefits the dear children of God in their pursuit of a godly path, not only initially when they turn to God but continually throughout their lives.

While it is true that God regenerates them by the same Spirit through which He assures them of their adoption, it is much more difficult for this work to take root in them and is filled with greater fear when they lack prior knowledge and conviction in their judgment. Even though their faith may be weak when they first turn to God, having this foundational belief to support and encourage them helps them overcome their doubts and fears more swiftly. Without it, they may frequently falter, become fearful, and lose hope, a phenomenon that becomes clear when observing weak Christians.

The same principle applies to all blessings, good fortune, deliverance from troubles, patience, and meekness in enduring them. They are bound to believe in everything that God states in His Word, whether it is a prohibition against sin or a command to fulfill a duty. They should depend on it, trust Him based solely on His Word, and allow themselves to be guided by it, always with a firm commitment to do so. This is referred to by the Apostle as the "obedience of faith." They must be convinced that whoever is given Christ by God is also granted everything necessary for this life and the life to come through Christ.

Consider Noah, who not only believed he had been made an heir of righteousness but also trusted that he and certain members of his

household would be saved in the flood. Similarly, Abraham believed not only that he was justified but also embarked on a journey to an unknown land simply because God had commanded it. He lived in the promised land as though it were a foreign country and believed he would have a son in his old age. Those who believed in the Savior to come among the Israelites, as Moses had taught them in a somewhat veiled manner, also believed in other promises, such as the walls of Jericho falling down after being encircled for seven days. Numerous examples of this kind can be found throughout the Scriptures, especially in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. This general faith, which gives assent and credence to God's Word in the elect, embracing both promises and commandments, with an honest heart ready to obey, must be instilled in them alongside the faith for salvation. This is because, as much as the faith for salvation, God's people will live and be sustained by it thereafter.

This doctrine, as it pertains to the promises of this life and God's commandments that guide us toward full sanctification here, was not included in my previous discussion of faith. Instead, I deemed it more appropriate to address it here in the context of teaching how to lead a godly life. This belief, the kind of faith I have described, is a specific aid and support for attaining godliness. I urge the Christian reader to pay close attention to this topic, as it is one of the most challenging aspects of Christianity to put into practice and understand. It is a matter in which believers must have unwavering conviction and stability. Unfortunately, it is often overlooked, insufficiently taught, and left unclear even by preachers in their sermons and catechisms. Yet living by faith throughout our entire lives, which is the fruit of such faith, is as clearly and distinctly taught in the Scriptures as one could hope for. This truth is especially evident in the writings of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews and the Galatians, where they declare, "The just shall live by faith," and "I

live no longer, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God." In essence, both passages convey the message that Christ, through His Spirit, draws His faithful to be led and guided by the word of truth found in Scripture, and they desire no other life than the one to which they are moved and persuaded by it—whether it involves following commandments or trusting in promises.

I mentioned that the type of belief I am discussing here is not often emphasized in public teaching. What is usually stressed is the resulting effect of this belief, which is that we should be obedient to the word of God. Consequently, most eager and diligent listeners (with the exception of a few who have gained a thorough understanding and practical experience) do not fully grasp this concept. Specifically, they may not be aware that they can be firmly persuaded that God will enable them to obey His will to the extent that they are capable. Moreover, if they come to understand that they are beloved by Him, they should believe that He will be with them to invigorate their will, draw their affections, and strengthen them to fulfill their duties, as the angel said to Mary, "Hail, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Many of God's beloved children, after striving for a long time to secure assurance of their salvation, are willing to embark on a journey of leading new lives. However, many of them become discouraged because they cannot see how they will be able to do so. To address any potential objection, some may point out that even the apostle Paul experienced such struggles, as he stated, "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." However, Paul was not complaining about the same issue I am addressing here. He did not lament that he had no hope in God or no promise of strength from Him to accomplish his

goals, as he clearly affirmed otherwise in various passages, such as "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" and "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." Paul's complaint pertained to the ongoing rebellion of his sinful nature, which was in conflict with his renewed self. This internal struggle, which we all experience while living, is irrelevant to the issue I am discussing. What concerns us here is that, in addition to contending with the rebellion of the old sinful nature, people must also grapple with the uncertainty of whether they will have the strength to make themselves capable or if God has given them any promises that their burdens will be lightened and that Christ Himself will bear the majority of the burden, making it easier for them.

For many true Christians, ignorance of this truth and a lack of firm grounding in it, combined with uncertainty that God will equip them and make them capable of leading a godly life, crushes their spirits. They may be willing and prepared to perform the duties required of them, but they are greatly discouraged because they cannot see how they will achieve it. In essence, they resemble the Israelites who were instructed to fulfill their previous labor quota of making bricks (a difficult task) but were also told to find and provide their own straw, making their work much more arduous. This situation has undoubtedly troubled many, even those who were willing and eager to perform their required duties. It has caused them to approach various aspects of their lives, such as bearing their troubles and offering prayers, with a sense of heaviness, dreariness, and weariness.

To benefit many devout souls, I will share what has been conveyed to me by several highly regarded Christians during our discussions on this matter. Specifically, I have emphasized the necessity of believing in general in every promise and command in God's Word, not just

the promises of salvation through Christ. Many have responded by saying, "Oh, if only we could have alleviated our own distress, fear, and melancholy moods by applying God's promises regarding the grace necessary for us, external deliverance from dangers, and success in our lawful endeavors in this life, we could have upheld ourselves with much ease and peace when we faced trials. Instead, we spent many hours, sometimes even days, pondering with heavy hearts how to navigate through afflictions and how to find contentment in likely future events, all because we failed to rely on God's providence, believing that He would turn everything for the best. Without this resolution, who can rest peacefully in the uncertainties of life here below? Having faith as a constant companion allows us to confidently embrace God's promises, enabling us to overcome difficulties and find comfort. By having faith in God, we could have assured ourselves that we would ultimately emerge from any hardship with a positive outcome, or we would have enjoyed any good things that were beneficial for us. We can truthfully say that one of the main reasons for our unfruitfulness and despondency over the years is our lack of firm grounding in faith while striving to please God. Satan subtly influenced us to hold onto this error of unbelief, even though we clearly possessed the seed of faith within us. This error hindered our progress in all other aspects of our lives, making us less diligent in pursuing goodness. It is evident that having unwavering faith throughout our lives, regardless of the effort it requires, is essential. Many Christians have acknowledged this truth, testifying to its effectiveness and value."

And moving forward, who does not know that even when people attain some certainty of salvation, they still experience many heartaches because they realize they have a long and wearisome journey ahead of them, with little knowledge and conviction of a great guiding force through all the fears and difficulties? Therefore,

have compassion for the distressed condition of God's poor people, you shepherds of His flock. Although this is just one of many aspects you must teach them, equip yourselves with the mindset of the Apostle, who deemed it necessary to continually remind the people of all things essential for salvation, even though they already knew and were firmly grounded in them. With your indulgence, allow me to offer one more piece of advice, which, if you heed, will greatly benefit both you and your listeners. Above all else, strive to have that which you teach to the people genuinely and effectively working in yourselves. You know that physicians who practice from experience are best equipped to treat their patients. Specifically, in this matter of faith, endeavor to exercise it more actively in your own lives. Consider how you apply it, whether in believing, for your own part, in precepts or promises, and do not content yourselves with mere knowledge of the truth. By doing so, you will reap great personal benefits from your teaching, even if your listeners do not. Moreover, such teaching, when you are confident that it has greatly benefitted you, will sharpen the impact of your doctrine through your more vibrant, cheerful, and powerful delivery. This will kindle an appetite in the people to receive it eagerly and, as in the time of John the Baptist, almost forcibly. If they are not led to practice true Christianity through this method, they are unlikely to be swayed by any other.

I hope you will not adopt the perspective of some who believe (a viewpoint unfit for a Minister of God) that although some preach from experience, no one is obligated to do so. It is as if they think they can choose to do as they please. However, we know that the good shepherd goes ahead of the sheep, and they follow him. If he leads them by setting an example of a good life, then he inevitably teaches them by experience the very principles he practices in his righteous example. Therefore, anyone who thinks they are not

obligated to teach by experience as well as by the written word essentially argues that they are not required to be a good person themselves, as they are the ones who teach.

Now that I have conveyed my intended message, I will proceed. In your teaching, strive to emphasize the approach I have mentioned: that of instilling in the people the doctrine of believing that God will provide all the assistance they need to live a godly life (while making it clear how they can attain assurance of their salvation, as I discussed in the first treatise). Instill this doctrine of faith in the people repeatedly, ensuring that they understand how they can be assured of their salvation. This is necessary because, across this dominion, it would be found that the people are ignorant and unsure about both how to attain the assurance of salvation and how to be properly taught to lead a godly Christian life. This happens because either men do not teach these concepts frequently (and anyone can see how necessary it is) or, out of pity for the people's weak understanding and memory, they do not emphasize these aspects often enough. S. Paul, for our instruction, has left us with his practice, saying, "I do not want to be burdensome to you, but to teach you the same things as before when I am not with you. It is a safeguard for you." We should realize that there is no shame in preaching the same things frequently, even to our own congregation. On the contrary, it is fitting and proper, especially if these are crucial matters. The only reason to avoid doing so would be to seek vain praise from people and display our pride by seeking novelty rather than the edification of the people. I am not advocating for repetition or the inopportune and tasteless repetition of the same words and sentences, particularly in intimate sermons. However, with the prompting of the Holy Spirit and by renewing our efforts in teaching the same doctrine as before, it will not be tedious or wearisome;

instead, the most attentive listeners will affirm that they cannot hear these teachings too often and will ardently desire to hear them again.

And since I have found an appropriate occasion to express this, I will add one more thing that should carry great weight with both preachers and the general populace. During this extended and gracious period of peace and freedom to preach the Gospel, it is a rare occurrence for an ordinary person (and I will not go any further) to be able to clearly and soundly articulate how a sinner can know that they are in a state of salvation and have the assurance that they are a child of God. Furthermore, once they find themselves in this state, they often struggle to understand how to bear the fruits of repentance and lead a godly and Christian life. I understand that it is the Holy Spirit alone who can work these matters in the hearts of individuals, but I am referring to the articulation and presentation of these concepts. While I have no doubt that some grasp these concepts, those who do so should be capable of expressing them to some extent. After all, we are instructed to "take unto us words" to convey what we understand, just as we are encouraged to have substance in our minds. Although having a general knowledge of these matters endears people to them, it is evident that elaborating on these concepts, connecting them coherently, is the way to facilitate proper understanding and conception. Through this approach, the listener is more readily brought to experience their transformative impact.

Returning to my initial point and concluding on this matter: While people do benefit from preaching to some extent and gain a genuine taste of salvation, they often waver, regress, and hesitantly pursue godliness if they are not well-grounded in the belief that God will continually strengthen them day by day and perfect the good work He has begun in them, leading to full sanctification in the fear of

God. If a chief and main pillar in a building is missing, will not the entire house soon become unstable? Similarly, if a Christian, embarking on the task of reforming their life, does not believe that God will enable them, they can be certain that they lack a crucial aid, something that may potentially undo everything they have built. If they do not have faith that God will empower them, what strength do they possess other than their own, which is as ill-suited for the task as a child is to construct a grand castle with their limited skills? However, if they are firmly established in this confidence, their heart having been purified and transformed (as will be discussed later), they will eagerly and willingly undertake the task. They will pray as necessary, even when their strength is lacking, and they will be spared from discouragement and despair. In times of weakness, they will rise again. All of this will provide significant assistance and encouragement, allowing them to rely on God without becoming greatly unsettled (although they will still feel and acknowledge their own weaknesses). It should be noted that the greater a Christian's knowledge of God's word, the more smoothly their journey towards godliness will progress. This knowledge, though idle and unproductive in them before grace came, will greatly assist them in avoiding evil and doing good, particularly with the benefit of experience over time. When all of these factors coalesce in an upright-hearted Christian, even one who is weak, they will be prepared to acquaint themselves with the promises of eternal life and store the certainty of the forgiveness of sins in a good conscience. At that point, they will have laid a firm foundation for a godly life, making it easier to build their life in harmony with these principles. Thus, although the rain may fall, the floods may come, and the winds may blow and beat against that house, it will not fall because it is founded on a rock. Conversely, those who do not lay this foundation but build on sand will see their work collapse. Many in these times experience this situation, where they begin well but stumble,

frequently deviate from the right path, and make slow and hesitant progress before the eyes of others. Yet, they did not understand how to make their beginnings more substantial and secure. Among various factors, they often fail in the very aspect I emphasize here: they do not establish themselves in the faith and confidence that God will support their weak beginnings and fortify their hearts against stumbling blocks and discouragements. I must emphasize that I have not only highlighted the importance of this faith when a Christian embarks on a godly life; I will also explain how it should accompany them throughout their life, becoming as essential to their entire existence as the eye is to the body. I will do so at a more appropriate time, God willing, and to the extent it is beneficial.

Chap 4:

Of the heart and how it should be cleansed and changed, leading to true sanctification, repentance, and a godly life.

And now, having demonstrated that true godliness originates from the justifying faith, and that one cannot exist without the other, and having established that through the same faith, we must believe in all His promises made to His children, as well as in all doctrines that instruct us in obedience, I shall proceed. My aim is to reveal the beauty of a godly life to some extent so that the believer may practice it and recognize their ability to do so, as I initially intended in the opening chapter. I shall begin by discussing the heart, which is the second general topic in this treatise, according to the division made in the first chapter. I will first explain that the heart must be renewed

and changed, and then, in the appropriate place, discuss how it should be maintained in that state. Both aspects are essential for the believer. When one is resolved to follow God's Word in all things, as previously taught, and has a heart ready to yield to it, the work towards living a godly life is well underway. With such a good start, one might say that half the journey is complete.

Therefore, understand and acknowledge that the heart, which is the source from which godliness must grow and flourish, must be purged and cleansed. Consequently, the body itself must be transformed into a suitable instrument to perform good deeds and lead a well-ordered life. In these two aspects lies the sanctification of the entire individual. We must undergo this transformation before we can desire and live rightly. Just as a filthy and unsavory vessel must be thoroughly cleaned before it can be used, we must cultivate a profound aversion to sin, witness a reduction in its power over us, cultivate love for goodness and righteousness, and undergo renewal within ourselves before we can produce the fruits of repentance and an improved life. To emphasize the necessity of this change and sanctification of the heart, as well as to underscore what an exceptional gift and grace of God it is, we should examine the nature and disposition of the heart before and after experiencing the effects of grace, before the Holy Spirit's skillful craftsmanship transforms and renews it. Understanding the heart's state, both before and after, will enable us to appreciate the proverb: "Like tree, like fruit." A good person brings forth good things from the good treasury of their heart, while a wicked person produces evil things from the evil treasury of their heart. Therefore, the heart of a person must be good, holy, and pure, willingly submitting itself to better guidance than it has naturally known, so that it may yield fruit in the form of an improved life and be readily inclined toward every good work.

However, to prevent self-deception, we must recognize that most individuals are ignorant of the heart's nature and properties. They mistakenly believe they can live a godly life regardless of the corruption within their hearts. To correct this misunderstanding, we must delve deeper into the nature of the heart and understand that all godliness is mere pretense or hypocrisy until the heart is reformed and changed. The heart must be cleansed and seasoned before it will no longer be an enemy or obstacle in our pursuit of good deeds. Instead, it should help us make progress in doing good daily or, at the very least, enable us to return to it after setbacks. We must understand that, prior to being emptied, the human heart is a pit of wickedness, a den of darkness before it is enlightened, and a pool of filthiness before it is cleansed. St. James' description of the unruly tongue applies even more so to the heart before it is tamed.

If such a heart is the guide of our life, how monstrous and loathsome that life must inevitably be! Therefore, it is evident that the heart must be cleansed of this corruption, as I mentioned earlier. It must be changed from its current nature and custom so that when we are called to depart from sin or perform any duty to God, the heart does not hinder or obstruct us. Instead, it should be ready to consent and assist in subduing its own corruption, time and time again. Otherwise, this would be a tedious and nearly impossible task. It would be like requiring a farmer to constantly repair and sharpen his plowshare whenever he tills the soil or a carpenter to grind his tools before every job. Since the heart is naturally resistant and reluctant to do good, the need for such constant adjustments would be even more preposterous.

To delve further into the heart and describe it in brief, we must understand that it is riddled with unbelief, deceit, unruliness, licentiousness, hardness, stubbornness, vanity, idleness, dullness,

coldness to goodness, lack of zeal, quick weariness of it, pride, arrogance, self-love, lack of charity, unkindness, self-conceit, impatience, anger, fierceness, envy, a desire for revenge, lack of mercy, perversity, rudeness, sullenness, meddling, worldliness, filthiness, and uncleanness. It loves pleasure more than godliness, is unprofitable, complains, clings to earthly desires, is greedy or covetous, indulges in idolatry, superstition, irreverence, hypocrisy, disobeys authority, rushes to judgment, and is hardly reconciled. In short, it is inclined toward all forms of evil. Is it not then a difficult beast to tame? This must be acknowledged, especially when the majority of people under the Gospel either do not know or suspect this, and those who do know it still love these corruptions as if they were their own flesh, making them no closer to purging or eliminating them.

It is not without reason that Solomon declares there are seven abominations in the heart, signifying many. Likewise, Jeremiah asserts that the human heart is deceitful and exceedingly deep—beyond anyone's capacity to gauge or search it fully. God Himself declares, "I am the searcher and finder of it." Our Savior, to describe the nature of the heart, says, "Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, slanders." Must it not indeed be a foul sinkhole from which such noxious odors emanate? Thus, it can truly be said that the human heart is exceedingly evil. Its various forms of evil are as numerous as the sparks flying from a furnace and as countless as the sands of the seashore. I need not say more on this topic now; I will have the opportunity to discuss it further in another place. However, it is lamentable that, despite Scripture's abundant descriptions of the manifold and grave defilements of the heart, people remain blind to them. They comprehend so little, even when the Holy Spirit reveals so much. This is why they fear so little danger and anticipate so little

harm coming from these defilements, despite ample reason to be apprehensive. Who could be merrier or more secure than someone whose own heart bears witness to their many sins? In light of this, it is clear that this cesspool must be emptied, and an abundance of grace and the water of life must be poured in to purify and season it before it is fit for good use. It must become a temple for the Holy Spirit to dwell in and a good treasury, from which a good person may bring forth good things. Indeed, it is a marvel that it can ever be transformed into something good.

To proceed, let me now explain what this purging of the heart entails and how it should be accomplished. First and foremost, it is a gradual process of renewal in holiness and righteousness for all true believers. They are initially liberated from the tyranny of sin and the fear of damnation. For as soon as a person is freed from the dread of eternal death and the wrath of God, they are naturally inclined to release their grip on sin, which they once held, and they sense that sin within them has been mortally wounded and its power diminished and crucified. This is when they experience what the Apostle describes to the Romans: "How can those who died to sin still live in it?" Concurrently, they are awakened and intensely motivated by a love and earnest desire for things that are holy and heavenly, seeking to please God. Renewed in the spirit of their minds, they develop a deep affection and longing for righteousness and true holiness. This is the essence of the heart's purging and transformation I am addressing, manifesting itself through a hatred of sin and a delight in goodness. It is something beyond the capabilities and will of a mere human, for it stands in opposition to human nature.

Although this new change may not entirely eradicate all the old corruption that once reigned within a person or allow them to

embrace only holy things, it is a significant transformation. The fact that goodness now has a place within them, where it was previously absent, and that they actively reject sin and evil in their will and desire marks a mighty alteration. Without a doubt, this is the first fruit of the spirit, which will eventually produce further growth for its continuity. This work of grace and sanctification, if present in someone, is an infallible sign of God's election and love toward them and cannot exist in a reprobate, just as light cannot reside within the depths of the earth. However, some might wonder what becomes of this grace over time, considering that it is evident that it not only becomes dimmed but is even choked in many individuals who once displayed its radiance and illumination. Those who ponder this must recognize that God strengthens and sustains this grace of holiness and sanctification in accordance with how it is nurtured, valued, and sought after. As individuals stir it up within themselves through earnest supplication and provoke themselves to pray for such virtuous inclinations, this grace is maintained. People cannot be content without these affections. King David often employed such methods, at times questioning himself, "Why are you downcast, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?" and at other times exhorting himself, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." Through similar means, we nurture the sparks within us, ensuring they do not readily fail or extinguish, especially for any prolonged period, except due to our own negligence or folly. Thus, you should now understand what it means to have a heart purged and transformed, making it suitable for embarking on a godly life.

The next aspect to consider is how this transformation occurs, and why men, after receiving the grace of justifying faith, perceive such a profound change within themselves, akin to a sudden transition from numbing cold to fervent heat. This is undoubtedly the marvelous

work of God Himself. By the power of His Holy Spirit, He mortifies our worldly desires and evil inclinations, thereby reshaping and creating holiness and sanctification within us. As S. Luke proclaims, it is God who purifies our hearts. He ignites virtuous affections within us and suppresses their opposites. No other being in heaven or on earth possesses this ability. Even the man of sin, had he realized this truth, would not have falsely claimed greater authority—the authority to forgive sins, an authority inseparable from this transformative work.

The Lord, through His Holy Spirit, stirs within our hearts godly motives and virtuous desires. These include the desire for knowledge, good governance, fear of the Lord, communion with Him and His people, the longing for spiritual joy, and the strength to withstand infernal adversaries. When these noble affections are kindled within us, God does not allow them to wither but instructs us to nurture and sustain them through reading, meditation, and prayer. The Spirit of the Lord, who raises up and fosters these holy affections in us, is aptly described by these magnificent titles: the Spirit of Wisdom, Strength, Fear of the Lord, and more.

God imparts these graces to His beloved children, particularly when they undergo this blessed transformation upon entering the state of grace. At this point, they abhor their old habits, akin to filthy garments they have worn for too long, namely the unsavory residue of their own thoughts, desires, and heart's lusts. These repulsive remnants were a constant danger, deceiving them. Upon recognizing the superior alternatives available to occupy and season their minds and hearts, they flee from these old vices as a liberated prisoner revolts against returning to their loathsome cell. While it is true that they must still bear traces and vestiges of their former defilement and profanity, akin to chains and shackles, their condition should not

be regarded as insignificant or worthless. On the contrary, it should be viewed as blessed and of great value because they have partially been delivered from it and now understand how they can partake in something far better.

I am currently addressing the initial stages of a Christian's transformation when they can perceive nothing more than the sanctification and purification of their heart, free from its inherent corruption and wicked inclinations. Without considering the ensuing fruit, the entirety of Christian work that follows this auspicious commencement, and which they eagerly long for, the weak Christian believes they owe an immense debt of gratitude to God for this. However, it is essential to recognize that one should not linger in this state but progress further to reach repentance, which inevitably follows. This will become evident in the subsequent discussions. Nonetheless, since the purification and cleansing of the heart marks the initial conversion of a sinner, it is a distinct work of the Spirit and merely the beginning of the entire Christian journey that follows. I do not wish to overlook it because, despite being seen dimly and confusedly, it holds great significance. Although it may resemble a mustard seed in comparison to the fully grown tree of Christian perfection, it possesses the same nature and is already part of it, hence deserving of a share in the reward. Currently, it awaits further development in knowledge and grace to manifest itself to others as what it truly is—the condition of a regenerated person, born anew in God.

Nevertheless, despite all that I have expounded on this matter, including what this heart transformation entails and how it is accomplished through God's Spirit, one crucial aspect remains, prompting the attentive reader to inquire further: Why does Scripture attribute the purification of the heart, even though it is the

work of God's Spirit, to faith? S. Luke states, "their hearts were purified by faith," and S. John, in similar terms, attributes it to hope, saying, "he that hath this hope, purgeth himself." I shall elaborate on this matter since it holds great significance and weight.

Indeed, it is true that our hearts are renewed and cleansed through faith. By faith, we come to understand ourselves as beloved by God. It is through faith in the precious promises of God, wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, that we turn away from the corruptions of the world driven by lust. Faith purifies the heart by expelling the impurities and filthiness that once resided within. Until our minds are enlightened to see clearly that our sins are forgiven, that we are united with Christ and made one with Him, and that we share in the graces of His Spirit, we remain self-absorbed, lacking any desire for heavenly matters. Our wisdom remains earthly, devilish, and sensual.

For, when we are not yet certain of the joys of heaven, we know of no greater delights than those our blind and deceitful hearts imagine on this earth. Although we may recognize, through experience, that these pleasures are short-lived and fleeting (even those who indulge in them most cannot retain them for long), we, who partake less in them, are reluctant to relinquish our affection for them until we see a clear path to enjoy something better. This can be observed among the less fortunate individuals who, despite their poverty, derive pleasure from discussing wealth—a clear indication of their deep love for it. This is the reason why countless individuals, due to ignorance, spend their lives engaged in frivolity, play, amusement, and indulgence, believing that living luxuriously for a while is the only life worth wishing for. Others immerse themselves in quarrels, disputes, murmuring, debates, lawsuits, and accusations against their neighbors. The most tolerable and honest course of action, in

the eyes of many, is to devote their lives to worldly possessions. In various ways, men occupy themselves, each according to their disposition, but all deserving of pity, for they lead astray. I refer to those who know no better. Nevertheless, none of them can be persuaded to change their ways or redirect their affections until they are certain of obtaining a far superior inheritance. Even if we bring them this news and they believe it to be true and are greatly intrigued by it, they will not attempt to evict their unpleasant and foolish desires from their hearts until they believe it can be theirs. However, when they come to believe that God is a generous rewarder of all who seek Him, and that those who were once not His people have become His people, beloved by Him—those who were once not beloved—then their hearts turn and seek after Him. They long to know more about His will and purpose, repenting of their previous ignorance and wasted time. They regret that they were so uninformed and indulged in the dregs of deceitful pleasures when they could have drunk from the sweet cisterns that could have refreshed their souls with the water of life. Though they may experience many doubts before reaching this conviction and assurance of superior delights, the moment they become certain of their salvation and understand the liberties granted to them through Christ (as previously explained in the earlier treatise), their evil hearts and affections are transformed. Their judgments become enlightened, and they develop a strong aversion to the sins they once favored, recognizing ample cause for this change. For through Christ, they receive the will and the power, by His Spirit, to do so. Faith, operating through love, causes them to love God and, for His sake, their brethren, prompting them to do anything for Him whom they love. Consequently, they are prepared to resist and cast off all allurements to evil and sin, which they cannot abide.

So, it is faith that purifies and transforms the heart, not as the primary and highest cause, for that is the Holy Spirit (as previously mentioned). It is the Holy Spirit who, at the same time that He assures us of our reconciliation with God, also works this change and sanctification within us. This transformation involves cleansing us from the corruption of our own nature and endowing us with a new quality and disposition of mind. Through this, we begin to will what is good and sincerely engage in pleasing God, all accomplished through the merits and power of Christ's death and resurrection. I mention this again for the sake of those who may find it somewhat difficult to grasp, as it may help them better understand the relationship between faith and a pure heart.

Both faith and a pure heart clear the conscience of accusations and doubts, fostering sweet peace and holy security (Romans 5:1). From faith and a pure heart springs forth a good conscience, one that is tranquil and forgiving (just as true love for God and our brethren stems from both). They motivate the will to despise sin, which it once cherished. Conversely, they regulate the affections, such as fear, hope, love, joy, etc., in a way that harmonizes the entire person. This renewed heart leads to a glorious repentance, a concept often discussed among professed believers but seldom put into practice. It encompasses both a determination of the heart (Acts 11:23), a disposition of the will (Psalms 119:44, 57), and a continual endeavor in life (Acts 24:16) to cast off all evil and obey God inwardly and outwardly, according to each one's knowledge. When we are sanctified, we are liberated from the tyranny that sin once held over us and are granted the freedom of the sons of God to live righteously and obediently. By receiving new measures of grace from Christ daily, we can maintain this freedom until the end.

I have explained this concept because it paves the way for the renunciation of sinful living and the practice of righteousness, a topic I will address shortly. This transformation is a necessary precursor to these changes, and it should help readers see that if their hearts align with this doctrine and they have a part in it, then they can confidently accept everything I will discuss later, as it all falls within the same realm and is contingent upon it. This way, they will find greater comfort in receiving these teachings. It should also make it evident to everyone that, despite the world's false claims, sound repentance and genuine fruits of amendment cannot be found without this effective cleansing and purification of the heart.

Even though not all true Christians can express these ideas as I have outlined them, the simplest among them, when they hear of it, can affirm that they have experienced this reality, bringing them immense consolation and contentment.

Now that I have demonstrated that the heart, and consequently the entire person, must undergo a necessary change and purification before good deeds can spring forth, I will return to my initial point, from which I momentarily diverged: that this transformation is accomplished through faith in Christ's promises and spiritual union with Him. To illustrate this point, as I mentioned earlier, St. Peter clearly articulates the truth that the heart is purified by faith. He says, "By the precious promises which we have from God (and these promises become ours through faith), we become partakers of the divine nature or the graces of the Holy Spirit. By the power of this heavenly Spirit, we are enabled to overcome the corruption and wickedness within our hearts and lives, which is the main obstacle to our obedience to God. Therefore, with this corruption subdued in us by a stronger power than itself, we have the liberty to pursue goodness, whereas we were once in bondage. Furthermore, as the

nature and qualities of our hearts are changed, we are no longer the same individuals we once were; we are led in the opposite direction of our former path."

This very idea, though not expressed in the same words, is skillfully conveyed by S. Paul through a fitting analogy. He states, "When we were in the flesh, the passions of sin, which were stirred up by the law, operated in our members to produce fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law (since the One to whom we were once bound has died), so that we may serve in the newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the letter." Here, he describes the initial state of life in which all reside—devilish and unrenewed—contrasting it with the regenerate and blessed state of God's children after they experience a transformation. He draws a comparison between our corrupt hearts, which were like husbands that stirred up evil desires in us, wielding the power of both mind and body like wives at their command. These together brought forth all kinds of evil works leading to our destruction. In contrast, the Spirit, representing the power of Christ given to us, stirs up holy affections in us and acts as a husband, exercising authority over both mind and body, just like wives. Together, these faculties produce all sorts of good works, akin to children, leading to our salvation. This makes it clear that although there is nothing within us, by our own strength, to fulfill God's will or produce fruits of amendment, God, who purifies the heart through faith, also instills a new nature within it. This new nature makes us love and delight in the good and holy things we once despised while also loathing the evils we once loved.

To further expound on the matter I have been discussing, which I recognize may be challenging for some, consider what our Savior teaches: He likens Himself to a vine, and His beloved to branches of the same vine. This analogy serves to illustrate that, just as a branch

cannot bear fruit if it does not grow in the vine and withers when cut off, likewise, without being connected to Him through faith, we cannot bear fruit. Just as a branch, while remaining in the vine, draws nourishment and sap, and thus becomes fruitful, all faithful and true believers derive strength and grace from Christ. Through this grace, they crucify their own lusts, resist their corrupt will, and bear fruit in accordance with God's will. For it is from Christ that the entire body receives the necessary increase, as He, in a manner similar to the soul, quickens all its members. Christ worked for our salvation, offering Himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil world. Through Him, we have received a mind to know God, a heart to love Him, a will to please Him, and to some extent, the strength to obey Him. As He states, "Know ye that ye are dead to sin," meaning that believers partake in the virtue and power of Christ to the extent that natural corruption loses its strength to produce bitter fruits. Believers are also "alive to God," signifying that they possess the strength to live in holiness through Jesus Christ. Although this grace may not be perfect, even in the weakest believer, it is sufficient to make a noticeable difference from their former state, rendering a godly life not burdensome but sweet and pleasant.

What often troubles those who are weak in faith concerning this matter is that the change of heart and its renewal are scarcely evident and are felt only faintly within them. Consequently, they find it difficult to satisfy their desire for further transformation. Previously, their open and gross faults did not trouble them, but now their inner corruptions distress them. Idle impulses, vain thoughts, and fantasies plague them during prayer, reading, and listening to sermons. Sometimes they fear that they do not truly believe, even after having received faith with a steadfast and peaceful mind. They feel unkindness toward God, coupled with unfruitfulness. In short, they accuse themselves of many shortcomings. When these aspects

are carefully considered, they indeed indicate a change in their minds compared to their previous state. However, due to their weakness and the devil's malice, they sometimes fear that they have not been renewed or changed at all. This should not be surprising, considering they were recently deeply immersed in sin and had no inclination toward goodness. Therefore, it is only natural for them to be amazed when they are told that their condition is better now. They are disturbed by the motions of sin that trouble them today, which did not trouble them before. Yet, they lack the knowledge and strength to understand that being grieved by these sinful inclinations is a positive sign of their well-being. Instead, they often interpret it as a sign of their misery. Nevertheless, their earnest efforts to become more stable, especially in resisting idle and futile thoughts, and their attempts to recognize their spiritual poverty and internal issues such as self-love, secret pride, and distrust, serve as clear evidence that they have indeed undergone a partial but true transformation.

Those who desire to live a Christian life must be convinced of this change of the heart. For those who can verify its presence within themselves (which should not be difficult if they compare their condition to what I have explained on this matter), pursuing any service to God will be far easier. This pure heart, born from unfeigned faith, should serve as a strong foundation upon which a godly life can be constructed. Without it, there will always be a lingering fear of having a double heart, which God abhors in His service. God does not accept divided hearts or half-hearted service. As Saul's example in 1 Samuel 15:3 demonstrates, God requires undivided devotion. He will not be content with just a little love. This level of affection is unworthy of His greatness and is unsuitable for those who have received such great blessings from Him.

Only those who understand their immense indebtedness to God for His generosity will be able to offer Him their hearts completely. They will consider Him their chief delight and treasure, prioritizing their relationship with Him above all else. For such individuals, laboring for God will not be tedious or burdensome; instead, it will be a joyful and fulfilling endeavor until they fully obey the command: "Give me thine heart, my son." If everyone had wholeheartedly surrendered to the Lord when they first embraced the Gospel (as those who truly believe in Him do), we would observe God being honored in the world, His true religion and worship advancing, and men turning away from their sinful lives as readily as the most pious preacher urges and encourages them to do in God's name. However, since this is not the case, those who recognize the magnitude of God's favor toward them should give Him their whole hearts, just as the burnt offering in sacrifices was entirely the Lord's. God desires those whom He regards as His own to turn to Him with their entire hearts, so they may be at His complete disposal without wavering, hesitation, or reluctance due to personal pleasure, profit, human friendship, or other worldly enticements. Such unstable and fickle service is detested by God.

If we willingly give ourselves entirely to God, determined to be guided by Him in all matters, and continually grow in the firm conviction of God's favor (which is better than all other blessings), then and only then will we have solid evidence that our hearts have been changed from their former sinful habits and renewed. Though many may hesitate and procrastinate, hoping that less effort may suffice or that they can please God without much ado, they must eventually be brought to this point. Otherwise, they will realize that all their other efforts, no matter how elaborate or well-intentioned, will ultimately be in vain. Their actions may appear righteous, but without the complete surrender of their hearts, they will not have the

strength to renounce their own wills and desires when tempted by them.

Due to a lack of this genuine transformation and heart purification, the people of Israel, though they turned to God during times of punishment, often returned to their sinful ways, breaking their covenants and promises of repentance. Similarly, today, many make vows of holy living and express intentions to repent, yet these vows and intentions rarely hold. They may vanish after varying lengths of time, as individuals hastily embark on these endeavors without realizing the fragility of their foundations in supporting a life of holiness. The example of Judas, who preached and performed miracles alongside the other Apostles, Ahab's swift repentance in sackcloth and ashes, Jehu's zeal for the Lord of hosts, and even Saul's prompt execution of God's commandments against the Amalekites—all these initially appeared as great piety but later revealed themselves, whether as mere hypocrisy, hasty and impulsive actions, or faithlessness from the heart. Even the best among them had a time to be exposed and revealed to the world for what they truly were.

Therefore, it must be understood that before one can renounce an evil life, God cleanses and purifies the heart to make it suitable for such a significant undertaking. Yet, given the heart's profound deceitfulness, those who least suspect and fear danger are the quickest to deceive themselves. Thus, it is essential to consider what has been previously explained: a genuine transformation entails a deep-seated hatred for sin and corruption, accompanied by a fervent struggle against it, feelings of anguish when it prevails, and, conversely, great joy when it is subdued. This, indeed, is indicative of a heart that has truly been renewed.

Chap. 5:

Of the Renouncing of All Sin: Which Is the First Effect of a Renewed Heart in the True Believer

Now that the heart has been renewed and changed, it must be kept in this state. I will address this matter later in a more suitable place. In the meantime, I will discuss the result of this cleansing and transformation of the heart, and elucidate the actions it brings forth in someone who is thus renewed and changed. Having previously discussed the necessity of cleansing, as I intended, specifically the need for a complete transformation and renewal of the entire person before any improvement in life can occur, it follows that I should now proceed to describe the Christian life, which I mean to be true repentance or the life of the believer, as I previously proposed. This life is the building that must be constructed on that foundation, and it is a conduct that arises from the aforementioned change—a renunciation of all sin and a commitment to walk in a new life, glorifying God through it, even unto death, as previously mentioned.

Regarding this, I will begin by emphasizing that the godly life consists of two main parts: renouncing sin and practicing godly duties. A genuine believer, one who desires to live a godly life, renounces not some specific sins or particular types thereof but all forms of ungodliness. Such individuals, who trust in the living God and are truly godly, have been transformed to the extent that they are now entirely out of favor with their former sinful ways, which used to be their sole delight and pleasure. They have been so

thoroughly changed that, having tasted the joys of heaven and become the beloved of the Lord, they willingly bid farewell to all the foolishness of their past and the unlawful liberties they once pursued, at least in affection and desire, as their human frailty permits. Those who have received proper instruction understand that it is impossible to hate some sins while loving others, as that would constitute a contradiction. Just as the one who taught them not to commit adultery also taught them not to lie or steal, they likewise judge accordingly and renounce both. How can they hate one sin while loving another, for that would be engaging in contradictory behavior? Just as pure and clean water and filthy water cannot flow from the same source, a reformed heart cannot produce both good and evil.

Consider this analogy: a prisoner, while in captivity, eagerly consumes scraps and leftovers and finds contentment in filling his belly with them. However, when he is set free and rejoins his friends, where he encounters variety and abundance, he can no longer return to his previous meager diet. He wonders how he ever found satisfaction in the discarded remnants of others. Similarly, a person who has indulged in and intoxicated himself with the deceitful enticements of sin, if he can satisfy his heart's desires and lusts, is content and has what he wants. Yet, when he sees the shame and danger of his condition in a clear light and tastes the heavenly privileges and freedoms of a Christian, he rejects his former filth like vomit and can never be persuaded to love it again. This is the honor God bestows upon His servants: their old way of life, in which they once lived like the rest of the world and could not be swayed from it, becomes utterly vile and detestable to them. Those who were once associated with the synagogue of Satan now worship God among the faithful. Such is the power of faith that it can transform the heart of its possessor to the extent that they overcome not only themselves

but also the devil's spiritual cunning, which deceives thousands, and the poisoned baits and enticements of the world.

O, power unconquerable and beyond compare! If there were any earthly support or worldly possession even remotely comparable to it (which is impossible), how highly would it be valued? If there were anything that, upon request, could deliver the life of one's enemy into their hands, grant them a long life, or fulfill their desires with wealth and sinful pleasures, oh, how warmly would that be welcomed? But consider this, O servants of God, and take notice, you mighty and wise of the world: here is a greater and a different treasure than all of these, bringing forth different delights that surpass them. This treasure does not lead you to pine for the death of your enemies, but rather, as it did with David, it turns your hearts toward your greatest enemy, which is your own sinful nature and worldly wisdom. It enables you to preserve the life of this enemy even when you have the power to destroy it.

Furthermore, this treasure does not lead you to chase after a variety of sinful pleasures in the world as if there were no better use of your precious time. Instead, it will make you, like Moses, renounce these pleasures when you could have indulged in them, finding the greatest pleasure in doing so. Giving them up will be your reward.

Lastly, this treasure will not allow you to fret or be restless when thinking about the day of death, or to push the thought of it away by wishing for a long life. Instead, it will make you sigh and long to be free from this life, echoing the sentiments of Paul, who considered living in the body as a form of imprisonment. You will even come to view the day of death, when you must depart from this world, as better than the day of birth, which marks the beginning of life.

O people of this world! If you can offer us greater benefits and news of better things than these, and assure us how to attain them, we will gladly abandon all else and rejoice with you. But if you cannot, and instead your most prized possessions are the ones I've mentioned already – great wealth, pleasures, the death of your enemies, and the desire for a long life – the vanity, uncertainty, and danger of which I've already described, then renounce all that you cannot securely keep and rejoice with us. Taste and see how good the Lord is, and when you discover what is best, embrace it. Otherwise, I must pronounce the words of the prophet against you, and in time, they will surely find you and hold you accountable, even if you try to hide from them. "Behold, and wonder, and perish; for I am accomplishing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, though it is told you."

More could be said on this topic, but the treatise has become quite lengthy. Now, I will return to the point that the believing Christian renounces the sinful path that the rest of the world indulges in, to varying degrees. As I have demonstrated, the believer renounces all forms of wickedness, not just some, and does so not merely in a good mood or when confronted with shame or danger. They do not merely express their disapproval of their former way of life under certain circumstances. Instead, after careful consideration, they make a solemn commitment to have nothing more to do with it. Just as Ephraim was advised to declare when called to repentance, "What have I to do with idols?" even though they had been her glory before. Thus, unlike many others, who only express their dislike of ungodly behavior when they see shame or danger approaching, the true believer is resolute in forsaking it and discards such behavior like a repugnant and tattered garment. This is the same message that our Savior conveyed to His disciples and followers after they professed their belief in Him for salvation. He said, "If anyone would come

after me, let him deny himself," which means renouncing ungodliness and worldly desires. Only then are people truly ready to hear about such matters, and not until then, as they often avoid such teachings as much as possible. This is why many who profess the Gospel never truly understand what it means to abstain from the filthy lusts that war against their souls.

Others who must hear such teachings that all of God's servants must renounce their past lives and feel ashamed of them, it's a pity to see how lukewarmly they receive it. Some of them mock and scorn it, brushing it off this way. Some fail to comprehend it at all. Some are often accused and made fearful when they see how far their lives are from what is taught, but they quickly forget it because they observe that most of the world does the same. Some are continually learning how to turn away from evil and forsake their sins, but the devil keeps them in check, preventing them from attaining it because they go about it incorrectly, not fully believing that they will be saved. A few find the way, guided by the Lord to believe, while others who refuse to learn how to believe from God but rely on their own reason never reach it.

But I have not yet mentioned the worst kind of people who hear this doctrine. They utterly hate those who teach it and vehemently insult and disgrace both the teachers and the doctrine itself. If they can, they even subject them to danger for preaching it, though they may present a different pretext. Indeed, I dare say that if we did not teach it with the gracious authority and protection of Her Majesty (which has more sway with them than the authority of God, in whose name and by whose command we teach it), their poisoned and malicious minds would permit no one to peacefully proclaim it, even though they claim otherwise. These individuals are far from overcoming themselves. While many groups in the world remain so distant from

obtaining victory over their wicked hearts and, consequently, their lives (as I have shown), the servants of God, who understand what the Lord has done for their souls, renounce all sinful desires and wicked deeds. They want no further association with the unfruitful works of darkness, even though they were once the chief perpetrators of them. Thus, like the truly repentant people of Judah, who had previously offended God through idolatry, and when they were taken captive into Babylon, they loathed the sight of false gods. Similarly, the good people who repented under Ezra's preaching put away their foreign wives, no matter how dear they had been to them. Ephraim also cried out, saying, "I am ashamed and blush that I bear the reproaches of my youth." It was so loathsome and wearisome to her. This is how those who have experienced God's salvation stand in defiance of the corruption of the world.

However, if this renunciation of evil were only for a short time, for show, out of fear, or for any such corrupt reason, it would not be worth mentioning. We have seen in our region, and I have no doubt others have as well, numerous individuals who once regarded their teachers as shining lights. For a time, they received and rejoiced in their teachings, willingly casting off their old ways before people. Some did so due to the influence of others, some out of fear of impending doom, and others for the sake of a good reputation, as long as they could maintain it. However, since they did not truly renounce their old ways or solemnly swear off them on careful consideration, they eventually returned to them, like a dog returning to its vomit. In contrast, those who truly believe and conscientiously renounce sin, as in the case of Nehemiah's people who entered into a solemn oath and covenant, promising never to take back their foreign wives whom they were commanded to put away, never to look back to Sodom again, and never to wallow in the mire once they had been cleansed. I do not say this as if their words, protests, or

oaths alone could, by their own strength, fulfill such a weighty vow. Instead, it's because through these means, they carefully considered why they should do so, how infinitely bound they were to God to fulfill it, and how firmly persuaded they were that God, who had already made them willing, would also make them able to do it.

Therefore, even though they did not see that help was present with their eyes, they hoped for what they did not see and patiently waited for it to be granted to them. Thus, both faith and hope were nurtured and strengthened in them day by day. Those who belong to the Lord find both the will to desire and the strength, though not perfect, to accomplish what they have set their minds on and attempted. I mean, willingly departing from their former intemperance. It must be admitted that this is not achieved without much struggle against these vices. It will require many prayers to weaken such corruption and to subdue such rebellion, along with meditating upon God's promises, sighing, and sorrow as they observe the unlikelihood of conquering these unruly passions due to their own weaknesses. But what of it? Is it too much if such a great work requires our vigilance and diligence when God is pleased to bestow it in this way, and no significant work will advance without it? Is this any just cause for discouragement when we must labor for such great profit, and we are assured of it even before we begin?

But it might be asked, do God's servants always prevail in their struggle against evil and obtain what they seek thereby? For otherwise, some might argue that this would bring discomfort and dismay. I say that, as God often helps them to overcome, they also frequently succumb to their own affections against which they strive. Yet they have learned not to be troubled by this as if it were a strange occurrence, or as if their hope were primarily sustained in this manner, as if they based their happiness solely on their feelings.

They have been taught that they stand by grace. On the other hand, they do not take it lightly when they are defeated and overcome. Just as they rejoiced in a measured way and gave God the glory when they felt the strength of grace against their temptations, so after they regain their composure, they are troubled and sorrowful, primarily for displeasing God. They take a closer look at their own frailty, ignorance, and negligence, confess these to God, and humble themselves. They do not cast away their confidence but are encouraged and emboldened to hope for forgiveness. They also become more circumspect in examining their ways afterward.

Now, tell me, if God's children are thus humbled and brought low, sometimes to subdue and lessen the strength of pride within them, what dreadful matter has occurred? What erosion of their faith has been brought about? Or what great reason is there for complaining when it is evident to all who can discern that what, through ignorance and weak faith, they feared would separate them from God, actually binds them even more closely to Him? Through His working, what they thought would cause great sorrow is turned into genuine rejoicing, primarily because they better understand themselves through this experience of His grace working within them. An experience they would not have had otherwise.

I can't find a more apt comparison to Satan's malice in this case than one who, in his attempt to pierce through his enemy and kill him, inadvertently releases an ulcer and corruption from his foe's body, ultimately preserving him. Similarly, with God's children, much hidden pride remains within them, along with secret self-favoritism and self-indulgence. This is likely to bring them great sorrow and danger. Therefore, when the devil fiercely attacks them and seeks to wound them with the fear of God's anger due to their sins or some specific failure, he purges that corruption from them by causing

them to see it, confess it, forsake it, and be vigilant against it in the future. They turn to God with faith-filled prayers for forgiveness earnestly, and through this, they do or may obtain it.

And thus, we can observe that even when God's servants are overcome by their passions and appear weaker in the struggle against them, those falls eventually lead to their great benefit. Therefore, it is not their undoing, as many may fear due to a lack of faith and experience. However, it should be understood that this only applies to true believers and not otherwise. Otherwise, someone might hear this and, after falling, become less concerned about rising again in the manner I've described, thinking that everything will be fine regardless, which is not possible.

So, due to this objection, I have spent more time on this topic than I originally intended. From this, it may become clear that, no matter how unskilled the Christian believer was and how unable he was to renounce his ignorant and sinful desires before the Lord became his teacher, he has since become proficient in this spiritual battle. In contrast, others who have not truly believed will find it as impossible for them to renounce their sinful ways as it is for a black Moor to change his skin or a leopard her spots. Just as Christ said about the rich man that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, so it is equally impossible for a wicked person to renounce his ways. This is because the wisdom of the flesh, which is the wisdom of unrenewed man, is an enemy of God and cannot be subject to Him. If people truly understood that there is no trace of goodness in them by which they can turn away from their sinful ways, and that their carnal wisdom and reason, to which they most strongly cling, hinders and restrains them from doing so, they would consider it worth all the effort to obtain this understanding. Currently, they are content to be deceived

into thinking that they possess it when they are entirely without it. This cannot change until their hearts are transformed and they are no longer in their old state. When they are endowed with new qualities, they will find it both possible and easy, as previously mentioned, to gradually gain control over their once unruly lusts and desires.

Chap. 6:

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

But let us proceed. We have already discussed how sin is to be renounced. Now, let's consider the various kinds of evil that need to be renounced before we discuss the good fruits and duties that result from this renunciation. These kinds of evil can be categorized as either inward or outward.

To address these categories distinctly, we are taught that in a godly life, found in whoever it may be, the lusts and desires that dominate the world and reduce those under their influence to behave like beasts—these corrupt lusts and other such defilements of our actions—are renounced according to the light of our discernment. The faithful desire to abstain from these lusts because they have received a different spirit than the people of the world. They can find delight in better things and understand the harm that these unruly evils bring, regardless of the fleeting pleasure they offer. Although everyone contends with these evils to varying degrees, even the

weakest of God's children hate and strive against them once they recognize and perceive them. However, by these inward evils, I do not mean the innate corruption of the heart, as I have discussed this previously. Rather, I refer to their fruits—the wandering, noxious, and misguided thoughts, fleshly desires, and worldly lusts that arise from the infected heart. These are contrary to God's commandments and directly lead to the destruction of those who entertain them. Just as the hands, feet, and eyes are members of the body that perform whatever the body requires, these inward evils are members or faculties of the heart, executing and fulfilling its desires. Although they are numerous beyond count (just as the heart's fountain is too deep to measure), many remain unaware of them. Consequently, they do not dislike their lives, nor do they feel shame or weariness, even though their lives are shamefully tainted by these evils, rendering them most abominable. First and foremost, the root of all these evils is unbelief—a failure to give genuine credence to the word of God and the holy Scriptures, causing one to audaciously entertain what is forbidden in them.

From unbelief sprout three branches or boughs, each producing innumerable worldly lusts, even among those who profess faith. These three categories of worldly lusts are: first, those that are impious against God; second, those that are injurious to fellow humans; and third, those that primarily concern themselves.

Regarding the majesty of God, people's hearts are shrouded in blindness and enveloped in darkness. They resist learning the true knowledge of the one true God, and the prospect of being drawn out of their ignorance feels like death to them. They cannot bear to hear about the day of His judgment, and they rebel against true spiritual worship of God. What they offer Him is a form of worship devised by their own will, driven by fantasy, custom, or worldly wisdom.

And when He requires confidence to be placed in Him for continuous defense, deliverance, and succor in soul and body, they are swept away by distrust like a whirlwind. Therefore, their hope is feeble, or nonexistent, until they see their desires fulfilled. In times of great danger when means to escape fail them, they succumb to fear and are nearly beside themselves. They react to losses with impatience and abundant murmuring, perceiving them as punishments from a cruel judge and grieving over them as if unto death. Some have their hearts boiling with such emotions during trials and afflictions, while others harbor stubbornness and contempt for God's afflictions, remaining loose, careless, and desperate no matter how dire the situation. They scoff inwardly, saying, "Let Him do His best, we will not turn to Him or seek Him." (An abhorrent blasphemy too terrible to utter!) I won't dwell on the poisoned corruptions and lusts of Heathens, Turks, and outright Atheists, as the list would be endless. Instead, I aim to expose some of the corruptions that reside in the hearts of those who profess to be Christians, so that many who boldly maintain their standing among men can see the wickedness and treachery they commit against God. This is just a glimpse of the dishonor they bring to God. It reveals the rebellion that exists in people under the weight of adversity. Their conduct during prosperous times is something that experience teaches, and I could elaborate further if time permitted. In regard to thankfulness, there is little to none. I challenge their consciences to consider what their hearts yield to God throughout the day for His abundant mercies. Even if some offer thanks, it is often done merely for show, superficial and insincere. Some are even ashamed to do so at their own tables. While they revel in worldly merriment, comfort, and abundance, they do not seek more grace but instead become more headstrong and excessive. When they pray to God, it is usually to indulge their lusts, becoming intoxicated with their pleasures. They love these pleasures more than they love God and, as a result,

become numb to spiritual sensitivity and completely devoid of true feelings. While some may not be completely hardened, they still have little desire to enrich their hearts with spiritual gifts, even though they know that the One who has given one gift is ready to give another. As for true worship of God, most take little pleasure in it. They follow superstition and blind devotion, falsely claiming that they cannot find satisfaction in the way God prescribes in His Word – worshiping in spirit and truth. God directs us to the Scriptures to know His will, but they prefer their own will-worship and traditions, such as representing God with an image or Christ with a crucifix. Their devotion remains cold and lifeless unless aided by these counterfeit deceptions. Some embrace the truth and maintain the right way of worshiping God according to His Word, but they deceive themselves by rejecting what makes worship truly pleasing to God and delightful to themselves – that is, worshiping with their hearts and joyfully. God makes it clear that worship without a heartfelt spirit is in vain. In their acts of worship, their hearts take no pleasure, just as in their private lives, their hearts are filled with vanity, profanity, and dissoluteness. They find no pleasure in pleasing God, even though it should be their food, drink, and pastime. They treat His judgments lightly, no matter how fearful they may be. They are far from being able to rid themselves of hypocrisy and other sins.

Moreover, they have no desire for peace, which should teach them the true use of it – to have peace with God and, as much as possible, peace with all men (Romans 12:18). They lack this peace even in their own homes, which, without it, become a living hell to them. Regarding the Lord's Sabbath and the many good means provided to season and transform their hearts, they either loathe them or find no savor in them. They do not seek comfort in these holy practices, even though they are the most precious jewels in a true Christian's crown.

If some do find comfort in them, it is often through superstitious devotion, wishing for the return of a religion that highly dishonors God. They follow in their fathers' footsteps, passing through the world as shadows with their minds fixed on lowly matters. Though they were created for honor, their lack of understanding makes them like the beasts that perish.

These examples provide a taste of the corruptions and worldly lusts in people's hearts, directly dishonoring God. When we see how God delivers His beloved from these and other sins, we will have more reason to love the godly life wholeheartedly. By God's grace, this life is freed from such excesses, meaning that these lusts do not control or reign over them, although they may sometimes gain temporary victory until repentance occurs. Such grace is not found or obtained by those who follow these lusts, even in their best moments.

To proceed, let us explore some of the unrestrained worldly lusts that drive people to harm their neighbors. Many display irreverence, contempt, and obstinacy in their hearts toward their superiors, diminishing the authority, credibility, and esteem that God has granted them. They disregard the value of age, position, and gifts. Where is the ancient reverence that younger men in the ministry once showed to those who came before them in labor, gifts, and good example? Many younger individuals imagine themselves capable of doing better than their elders, ambitiously aspiring to positions they should not seek and elevating themselves above those who should be their mentors. Instead of learning to honor and submit to those of lower status, they look down upon them.

How ungrateful are people to those who labor for their peace and well-being in temporal matters and serve as instruments to bring the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ to them, such as Christian rulers and

authorities? How many despise those who work to make them happy and grant them eternal life, as though they wished for their death? They even wish this for their natural parents if it would bring them riches and advancement. How much audacity, impertinence, and boldness do young people exhibit toward their elders and rulers, revealing such rudeness and barbarism that it would be deemed disgraceful even among heathens. But I shall restrain myself.

Furthermore, when it comes to the souls of our neighbors, which should be most precious to us, many rejoice to see them fall into sin and actively seek to lead them into wrongdoing, such as drunkenness or abandonment of hearing sermons. They may also resent or disdain those who live a Christian life instead of reverencing the grace of God in them. We should love others as ourselves, genuinely and sincerely, not merely in word and appearance. However, throughout the world, people often act like wolves or devils to one another due to the strength of their lusts. They harbor anger that cannot be appeased, deadly hatred toward others, and a relentless pursuit of revenge. They seldom reflect upon their behavior or feel ashamed. People readily assume the worst about others over the slightest offense, yet expect others to overlook the gravest offenses they commit. They show little concern for the harm they cause others and instead exhibit a callous insensitivity or even indifference.

When it comes to avoiding disputes between individuals, how few are willing to forgo some of their rights, as Abraham did with Lot, and come to equitable terms of peace, which should be their duty? Instead, people often think of ways to provoke others further. As for patience and long-suffering towards those who overstep their bounds, how rarely do we find such qualities in ourselves? How infrequently do we bear with others and show patience by overlooking their offenses? How seldom do we forgive even minor

wrongs, seeking instead to exact revenge? This is a far cry from the Apostle's admonition: "Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice, and be of the same mind toward one another" (Romans 12:15-16). The prevalence of these fleshly lusts and the brazen justification of them have caused me to dwell on this topic a bit longer.

Now I turn to the type of fleshly lusts that are most appropriately labeled as such. These are the lusts where individuals allow their hearts to be overtaken by impure and unclean thoughts and desires. They purposefully defile their bodies, which should be kept pure until the day of marriage and thereafter throughout their lives. These unclean wishes and desires take on various forms, burning with passion at the sight of those who please their eyes. They are ensnared and deceived by the allure of such individuals. And if that were not enough, they do not stop at this shameful state. They take delight in further inflaming these burning lusts, occupying their thoughts with discussions of impure matters and indulging their eyes wantonly. They become those whom the Scriptures describe, with eyes full of adultery. They seek out places where they can satisfy their carnal desires or fan the flames through all forms of provocations. Thus, the precious treasure of the mind, which could have been filled with divine matters and made more angelic, is turned into a foul brothel and a breeding ground for impurity.

Consider the mental effort they put into deceiving and ensnaring innocent virgins and modest matrons to lead them astray, for common prostitutes and defiled harlots are easier targets. I am not referring to the worst elements of society in our land, but rather to those who appear civil and outwardly respectable. Many of them are even married individuals who hold positions aimed at maintaining order in our towns. There are thousands of them who are susceptible

to these deceitful lusts, lusting after their neighbors' wives, as the prophet describes, and obstructing the path of a Christian life, which they might otherwise have come close to leading. But this is just a glimpse.

I will now address the kind of lust that involves an insatiable desire for money and gain, regardless of the harm it may cause others. This type of lust is rife with various forms of evil and occupies people's minds year-round. They constantly scheme to acquire more through new forms of deceit. Their desire for other people's possessions knows no bounds, and they are resolved to become rich, despite the warnings given by the Apostle to Timothy. People from all walks of life grumble at the sight of others gaining what they cannot. The mighty seek to exploit and impoverish the less fortunate, landlords fleece their impoverished tenants, leaving them with nothing but the barest essentials. Their predecessors lived together in love and goodwill, with one content and the other amply provided for. This is one of the main causes of the widespread poverty we witness today.

People are willing to forsake the welfare of others in pursuit of personal gain. They aim to control certain commodities entirely, causing a general scarcity to satisfy their personal desires. In common dealings, it seems that nothing is appealing to people unless they can acquire more than what is rightfully theirs. Borrowers, even when aided by friendly terms, seek ways to defraud lenders, so they need not repay the loan. Lenders devise new forms of usury and oppression against borrowers, leading to the ruin of countless individuals, despite the Lord's strict command against any form of oppression or usury.

The same applies to sellers and buyers, where fairness and impartiality are abandoned if they do not align with personal gain.

This occurs even among individuals who possess religious beliefs. All of these examples illustrate the preoccupations of people's minds and the nature of the thoughts that fill their heads.

To conclude my discussion on these worldly lusts that harm our neighbors in their possessions, let me address another type. Instead of seeking to preserve the good name and reputation of others as their own, people often behave preposterously due to their unruly lusts. How rare are those individuals who interpret doubtful actions or words favorably, rather than immediately suspecting malice and forming negative opinions? Their rebellious lusts are so strong that they cannot be restrained. Consequently, deep misconceptions and hasty suspicions arise, often leading to false judgments against others who acted honestly and meant well. Hearts burn with a desire to speak and act decisively against them, much like Shimei did against David. They thirst to defame others through spoken or written words.

Moreover, if they were aware of any offense committed by someone many years ago, even if they initially concealed it and made light of it, they are now eager to disclose it if it can be used against them. They engage in inventing libels and creating new slanders, even against their own brothers and close relatives, with shameless boldness and impudence that rivals Jezebel. These actions reveal the swarms of outrageous lusts that secretly fester in their hearts, often unbeknownst to themselves. They put on a facade for others, embracing them with a Judas-like kiss while secretly abusing them behind their backs. These shameful faults would not manifest openly through words and actions if they were not previously nourished in the heart.

To address potential objections claiming that these behaviors are not always so bad, I must emphasize that such tendencies are far from commendable. They are already too common and would be even more so if not for other inhibiting factors. One cannot deny that instead of desiring good and drawing nearer to God, they often spend their time wishing harm upon their neighbors. This not only deceives their own hearts but also wastes precious time on futile dreams of things that will never come to pass. It is a life filled with self-deception, unprofitability, and weariness, not to mention the peril it poses to their souls. They become servants to their own lusts, whereas they were created by God for higher purposes.

In summary, I have outlined the lusts of the heart against God and fellow humans in the context of the commandments. These lusts, which dominate the lives of wicked individuals, are responsible for all forms of dissoluteness, licentiousness, and disorder in their conduct, often resulting in severe punishments. By discussing this matter, I hope to illustrate the remarkable mercy of God to His children, who abhor such filthiness. Although the common crowd may disregard this grace of renouncing such impurities, deeming it excessive, it remains an adornment before God and a precious comfort to the individuals themselves.

Chap. 7:

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

Now, let us explore the branches of earthly corruptions and worldly lusts. Although they offend God, they do not directly concern God's person or their neighbor's person but, above all, themselves. In some way, I aim to uncover and expose the foul source from which all sinful conduct emanates. This source is known to few, and therefore, they do not suspect the danger they are in. I will briefly provide a glimpse of these evils, as I did with the previous ones.

These evils are so wicked and monstrous that, even though those who harbor them may not directly engage with God or other people, their hearts are profoundly troubled by them, often continuously. These outrageous lusts sometimes so willfully control them, like a powerful current, that when they fail to achieve their desires – even that which they most covet – they wish for nothing more than to escape this world. In the process, they forget all of God's kindness towards them. Yet, when God indeed calls them from this world, they cannot bear to hear of it and rebel against it more fiercely than against anything else in the world.

Again, they are so unruly that when God gives them freedom and blesses them with abundance of outward benefits, they find no delight in them unless they excessively indulge in eating and drinking. However, this indulgence is not for sustenance but for gluttony, rendering them unfit for any virtuous activity. They revel in frivolous amusements, going from one form of entertainment to another, considering it pleasurable to live luxuriously for a time. They spend lavishly on clothing and meticulously adorn their bodies, without concern for the needs of others, despite the fact that their surplus could provide clothing for many who go without. They derive satisfaction from this extravagance and imagine that others admire them for it. They may even extort and exploit others to sustain these indulgences, rejoicing excessively in their children but often

neglecting their proper upbringing, which is condemned as the very essence of pride in life. Their hearts are set on such pursuits during times of plenty but conversely fret, murmur, and vex their hearts when they face necessity, even though they have heard that a good name is more valuable than gold. They persist in following their gross appetites until the consequences of their actions tarnish their reputation and good name, as if these held no value.

What can I say about their pride in their intellect, wealth, beauty, strength, wisdom, and other talents? They act as if they are invincible, oblivious to the reality that they do not know when they will lose these attributes. They make plans for tomorrow, forgetting that they cannot predict what might happen today. Their capriciousness, instability, and obstinacy in disliking everything; their frivolous, idle, and frivolous desires for things unbecoming of those destined for a higher life; their fits of sullenness when nothing pleases them; their meddling in matters that do not concern them; their foolish self-love that blinds them to their own faults, and countless other concupiscences that emerge daily, all make it evident that their hearts are burdened and weighed down, even if they do not openly commit outward sins. They must confess that divine power and grace from above are needed to purge these and similar unsavory impurities from them. These, among many others, are renounced as they become known to God's servants and are resisted according to the wisdom that God has bestowed upon them, although they may reign unchecked in others. Acquiring the grace to do this is a part of the Christian life, as I have mentioned. By making the word of God their guide, they benefit from the insight to be cautious and vigilant against their corrupt and harmful desires. As David says in Psalm 19:11, listing various uses and benefits of God's law and word, including that it is more desirable than fine gold and sweeter than honey: "Moreover, by them your servant is warned; in

keeping them there is great reward." Solomon echoes this sentiment in Proverbs 2:10: "When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you; understanding will keep you." What better way to be preserved than against the machinations and desires of our wicked hearts? Saint Paul also highlights God's gift of this grace to His faithful in 2 Corinthians 10:4: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Additionally, in Ephesians 4:22, he emphasizes the importance of putting off the old self, which is corrupted by deceitful lusts, as a sign of having truly learned Christ.

Thus, having laid bare the catalogue of these worldly lusts and established that the Lord, through the Scriptures, grants greater grace to His followers than to obey these lusts (James 4:6; Rom. 6:16), I will now proceed to demonstrate that this is a distinctive aspect of Christianity: the ability to restrain and resist these lusts. Any sensible person, when properly advised, would not greatly deny this. If one could free themselves from their passions and inordinate desires, which hinder them from fulfilling their duties like restrictive cords, they would be able to move forward without hindrance, promptly and effectively. This, of course, presupposes that they strive daily to achieve it and remain enclosed by infirmities. It is the evil heart that causes people to turn away from the living God. It is their fleshly lusts that wage war against their souls, hindering them from walking with God and ultimately leading to their destruction. As James asserts, these lusts "war in your members" (James 4:1), pulling them violently and foolishly away from their settled peace and causing them to rage when their desires are unfulfilled.

Hence, by weakening these lusts and restraining their influence, it becomes evident that Christians can lead their lives with ease and joy. Just as our Savior Christ, being free of all corruption and sinful desires, was invulnerable when the prince of this world tempted Him (as He does to other men) but found nothing in Him to serve his purpose, so too can our hearts, cleansed and purged from their natural corruption (though not entirely rid of it), and our troublesome lusts and passions, suppressed and weakened within us, be wounded in such a way that they cannot master us to the point of preventing us from loving, desiring, longing for, and doing the will of our God, albeit weakly and imperfectly in comparison to what we ought to do. Nevertheless, God will accept this as holy service, not scrutinizing our faults but pardoning our sins through our Advocate. Thus, despite our obedience being far from perfect, we may find peace in it, as it is, devoid of fear.

Thanks to God's great mercy, we have been made participants in the knowledge of His will, so that when our desires are subjected to Him as I described earlier, we can possess our souls in peace and a heavenly manner. Therefore, if any individual, purified by faith, seeks to understand these shameful lusts within them, examines how they are led astray and deceived by them, identifies the lusts that most trouble and frequently prevail over them, and resists them with the help God has provided (which will be explained in the next treatise), they should not doubt that they are engaged in godly living and have left behind the filthy Sodom of their former sinful conduct. The godly individual conducts themselves in this manner and chiefly strives toward this goal. True wisdom, which comes from above and from which every godly person derives their name, that is, they are called wise, manifests itself in all forms of holy conduct with meekness. It does not tolerate the dominance of contrary lusts such as bitter envy, provocations, arrogance, uproar, and strife against

one another, each to the extent that they are prone. Indeed, not everyone has conquered themselves to the same degree, even among those who have undertaken the task of tearing down the ruins of their old self. Those with greater knowledge of God's will and the entire mystery of godliness, combined with heartfelt affection, are the most zealous. To be more explicit, those who truly treasure faith and a godly life, recognizing that these are greater riches and pleasures to them than gold or any worldly possession and who hold them in such high regard, just as they are rightly esteemed in their judgment, are the individuals who will go to the greatest lengths to resist their lusts and desires. They gain the greatest victory over them, are least overcome by them, and, it must be acknowledged, have the greatest advantage against them. They understand best the benefits that result, such as inner peace, and many other blessings. In God's mercy, we have many examples of such individuals in Scripture who have achieved a high degree of such grace. Through their positive examples, we can see that this is not an unattainable goal, and it is not beyond our reach, provided we seek it and strive for it. However, as I mentioned before, not all of God's servants have the same measure of grace; therefore, they do not all attain to this exceptional degree.

To move forward, with the intention of edifying those who, by God's grace, are more numerous than the former group, and who all desire to forsake their noxious corruptions and rebellious wills, even though they may lack the same breadth of heart and measure of grace that some others possess, I would like to offer some advice based on what the Lord has revealed to me. I want to reassure them that they should not be troubled by the fact that they are lagging behind other servants of God in mastering themselves or have not gained control over their affections as some have. They should not

doubt their faith and godliness on account of this. It is important to understand that not all believers are equally accomplished in mortifying their flesh and growing in grace. People have different capacities and ambitions, and not everyone possesses the same knowledge, values, and priorities. Consequently, not all will strive for godliness in the same way as others. Some will bear thirty-fold fruit, some sixty-fold, and some a hundred-fold from what they hear. It is commendable and appropriate to follow the best examples we have and to be inspired by them, but we should not be discouraged by our differences, as long as what is in us is genuinely present. I mention this for the sake of those who think and often express the same sentiment, saying, "I am not like some of God's children! They are fortunate because they are not troubled by stubbornness, impatience, anger, weariness during good exercises, wandering thoughts during sermons, reading, and prayer, as I am." However, these individuals, even while they complain, demonstrate that they are making progress in conquering their corruptions, far more so than those who are not troubled in the same way. They clearly show their love for the grace they are mourning for and their hatred for the corruption they are complaining about. Therefore, let no one compare themselves to another. In the little that they know, let them be faithful. As they see the excellence of a life free from these lusts—meaning not being enslaved by them—they will renounce them. There is no liberty greater than this. All other forms of liberty, when sought to satisfy our own desires, amount to utter servitude and bondage.

With these considerations in mind, it becomes clear that all true Christians, to some extent, resist and turn away from the inward lusts of the heart and its known corruptions. This is according to the Apostle Saint Peter's statement: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is

in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4). If those who embrace and believe in these promises and have thus attached themselves to a godly life avoid the lusts and corruptions that others delight in and embrace, it follows that those who are ruled and led by these lusts cannot claim any part in a godly life. For anyone who thinks and acts this way cannot help but be carnal, estranged from God, and a slave to hell. If this were carefully considered, it would cause many thousands who now consider themselves good Christians to take some trouble to restrain their intemperate and unruly hearts and to be deeply wounded by them, rather than granting them license in most of their desires. Let such weak Christians (to omit others) place their hope in some particular state of grace and not delude themselves with unattainable goals. By a certain state of grace, I mean the following three things: first, having a clear understanding of their salvation; second, holding it as their greatest treasure; and third, being engaged in some righteous and commendable course of life, whereby they can grow in faith and obedience to God, even though they may struggle. If they lack any of these three, they will be ensnared by fear and anxiety when they realize that something is amiss. They will often fear that they have not started correctly and have never truly been called. Yet if they forsake this hope, since there is some spark of the new birth alive in them, they should not abandon their faith as the wicked do. Rather, they should seek to return to it, like a bird that has strayed from its nest. Otherwise, they may walk heavily for many months, or even years, before finding deliverance. Thus, they must be diligent in nurturing their faith. Even though their godly life may involve labor and toil, they must understand that one day they will feel content while on another day they may not. Sometimes they will feel well grounded, and at other times they may be troubled without peace. When they are grounded, they should hold fast to their best treasure and consistently solace their souls with it. They have many good resources at their disposal,

so they should not let anything deter them. If they do not maintain this as their greatest wealth and continue to refresh their souls with it, their peace will not endure for long, nor will they remain content with the course of their life. The devil, who knows their weaknesses and envies their godly and sweet condition, will create many opportunities to unsettle and trouble them.

These three things, therefore, being of such special value, must be highly regarded and diligently sought after by those who lack them. They should seek preachers who not only teach about them but also engage in conversations on the same topics. This will inspire the people to hunger for these virtues and encourage their teachers to be willing and ready to provide guidance and comfort to those who approach them, much like the people in the Gospel who sought Jesus or His disciples for answers and teachings. While other doctrines should not be neglected, it is crucial to understand that nothing is as vital to learn as these three virtues for those who have already grasped the knowledge of true happiness through Jesus Christ. Without these, progress is hindered, as previously mentioned. Just as a person knows nothing profitable for salvation before believing, similarly, after believing, one knows nothing that aids in growing in comfort in their Christian journey without faithfully and carefully nurturing these three virtues.

For my part, I want you to understand that the primary intention behind publishing this book was to assist and guide weak Christians from their initial encounter with the knowledge of Christ Jesus. By understanding and believing in the rich portion bestowed by God, they can place the value it deserves, esteeming it as superior to all else they possess. They can then enjoy the fruits of this knowledge in a holy life, as God has instructed. Anyone who diligently endeavors to obtain these virtues (which are easily acquired and come without a

price) will progress readily and effortlessly in their pursuit of godliness. They will not long for the luxuries of the wealthy but will become an example for others to follow. They will not find themselves in the same predicament as those mentioned earlier, who occasionally doubt their calling, but will know how to rise when they fall and find their way back if they stray from the path. They will walk safely under God's protection throughout the day, as will be explained later.

You may wonder what your portion will be. I cannot specify a particular measure or compare it to someone else's heavenly peace, contentment, or other graces. Your portion will be something so beautiful and brilliant that it will amaze you, exceeding even your own expectations. If you further inquire about how to attain this knowledge, esteem it, and preserve it, this present treatise (alongside the assistance of public ministry and private discussions) will guide you. I have no doubt that the humble and teachable reader will find guidance in some part of this work.

However, to further reassure those who are troubled by the lack of such graces that God bestows upon some of His children, they should understand that we cannot appoint the Lord His times and measures. We cannot show any reason why we should not hope for what He has promised if we seek it as He teaches us, as will be explained later. If the Lord does not increase our faith, knowledge, experience, strength over our corruptions, comfort, and other such fruits of His Spirit, we should not fear it as long as we fervently desire it. He has sufficient reason for not granting them, which is that He knows it would not be good for us if He did. His withholding is not due to unwillingness but because He sees that they could harm us, making us unfit to use them properly, as many tend to become proud of such gifts. For this reason, even the Apostle himself stated

that the Lord denied a gift he had fervently prayed for. God may also deny blessings to His faithful servants to test whether they love them enough to continue seeking them. This should not be taken harshly. However, if they do not grow, it is justly attributed to their own fault—ignorance or a lack of understanding in how to labor for these graces, slothfulness in avoiding the effort, and favoring themselves against their consciences, not removing obstacles in their path. If none of these are the causes, it may be their timidity and unbelief, fearing that the heavenly grace they seek will not be given to them, which dishonors God. God is more ready to give than they are to ask. He gives abundantly to those who ask without reproach, but they must ask in faith without wavering, for those who waver receive nothing. Can the Lord provide a stronger and more certain remedy for our distrust than by encouraging us in this manner, considering that unbelief hinders us? Even when we strive to please Him and grow in grace, we often become stuck in the mire of unbelief. Even after doing all, we doubt that God will grant our request. This doubt is so deeply ingrained in us, revealing that we can hardly believe beyond what we can see. I know that some people answer in this way: they dare not be so bold as to assure themselves that they will receive the grace they pray and seek for. However, I say that once an evil conscience is removed, their doubt may quickly disappear. They fear presuming, but God promises and commands us to trust Him. Reverence is indeed a virtue to be sought and embraced, but we must differentiate between full persuasion of what God promises and an irreverent boldness to claim what He does not promise. Therefore, do not fail to serve God's providence, use the means faithfully to grow and increase in His graces and gifts, and rely on the Lord by faith. He will not fail or disappoint you.

CHAP. 8.

How the minds and hearts of the believers are usually occupied, as they renounce inward lusts.

But to return to the renouncing of our lusts: If you ask me what kind of persons they are who are in conflict with this unsavory stuff, and what thoughts such have that expel these corruptions and hold them in hearty contempt, given that the mind is ever busy and seldom unoccupied? I answer that these persons are, as I have said, sinners like others but sanctified, and weak yet willing to improve. Their thoughts vary according to the different stages of growth and ages of God's children, which are three.

The highest degree is old age or the experienced state, which, however, is not the perfect age in Christ, for that awaits us in the life to come. It is a firm, constant, and settled progression towards that perfection. The second degree is the middle age in Christianity, akin to young men in wrestling. In this stage, we have courage against our sinful lusts, but we also face many setbacks and occasional lapses in our determination, though we do achieve victory at times. In this state, we can be likened to the mustard seed after it has sprouted, with a blade and stalk, growing slowly. This degree of Christianity falls between old age and infancy. The third degree is childhood or infancy, the lowest and final stage. This is primarily characterized by a strong desire for the sincere milk of the Word, especially the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Although some of these dear children of God may not fully grasp it with unwavering confidence,

their intense hunger for it, along with a palpable fear of offending God, serves as a true indicator. This is the lowest stage of true believers, and it is initially weak compared to the other two, just as in the natural body, where infancy is initially frail but gains strength as it grows in years. Nonetheless, this stage is excellent when compared to counterfeits who bear a striking resemblance but exhibit fleeting motions toward good things that ultimately vanish. These degrees of spiritual birth, which can easily be discerned through the Scriptures, illustrate the differences among believers.

I will now describe the chief preoccupations of thought for these three stages, or at least their desired preoccupations, even if they do not always attain them. To begin with the first stage, some of God's elect, through extensive experience and a deep familiarity with the practice of a godly life, have acquired the grace to guide them more consistently than others. They serve God in a way that pleases Him, with a reverent awe of His majesty, which keeps them within bounds. They possess a holy and religious fear of offending Him, whereas others may easily fall into sin. This stage, though the aim of all godly people, is only achieved by those who have accustomed their minds to a heavenly course. They find pleasure in good meditations and thoughts that help them avoid evil. They have developed the ability to discern good from evil through understanding and judgment, and their will is under control, allowing them to choose the good and shun the evil. Saint John refers to them as fathers in his epistle when he says, "I write to you, fathers," because they have known the Lord and His ways for a long time, experiencing the discipline and governance of His house through a godly life.

Now, those who have been trained in the obedience that the Scriptures teach from their youth are able, after their long experience of God's guidance in that path, not only to proceed willingly and

cheerfully themselves but also to persuade and encourage others. Such individuals, through the grace received from God, are largely freed from this bondage and are not so grossly ensnared by their corrupt lusts as others, although God occasionally shows them their weaknesses, especially to humble their pride, which can easily be kindled in them and needs to be kept in check. Their minds are usually occupied with one or another of the countless heavenly instructions they have stored in their hearts from the Scriptures and the teachings of other holy individuals. These meditations and thoughts help them avoid much evil, even if they don't experience the quickening they desire. They spend their time pondering God's majesty, His power, wisdom, and eternal existence. They contemplate His judgments, how He is provoked, His patience, and long-suffering toward the world. They reflect on their own state and various aspects of their lives, considering how to remain on the right path.

They also ponder how to maintain their profession of hope with joy until the end, resist all occasions of evil, and overcome the obstacles presented by Satan, the world, and their own hearts. They strive to manage their daily actions in their callings, rendering to all their due, and seeking to prosper while ensuring they can give a good account at the end of the day and, ultimately, at their life's end. Their predominant daily concern, unless they are deeply blinded, revolves around having a good conscience in all things, pleasing God, and preparing themselves for the trials that may come, with a mind ready to endure them. By being frequently exercised in such matters, they attain the fruit of righteousness—peace. As their salvation draws nearer, they become fitter and readier to meet the Lord, with their latter days being far better than their former ones. They find joy in God's blessings and are never at ease or content unless they are under His governance.

Should they have no other matters to occupy their thoughts than how to pass the long summer days and wearisome winter nights with the world's dregs and distractions? Even though the profane may not have a different perspective, we can observe that it is not the case for those who seek the spiritual path. Must people believe that because the devil has shrouded much of the world in darkness, making it impossible for many to see or experience these spiritual truths, they should not desire to partake in them? Is it assumed that there is no other or better way to occupy one's mind? Is it acceptable to simply follow the crowd, conforming to the ways of the world like brute beasts? It is bewildering that under the Gospel, which has been present for so long and has been faithfully preached in many places, people are still unable to discern its true fruits. They do not turn to God through it any more than if the Gospel were absent. It is disheartening that people, created by God to live forever, are content to remain ignorant and lack care or love for the infinite and glorious truths that are revealed for them to know and delight in. The Lord has done great things for humanity, but these wonders often go unnoticed. This blessed time is a visitation from the Lord, yet it remains hidden from many.

But let me clarify: I've shown you how some of God's people have their minds occupied once they've banished the noxious swarm of unclean lusts that once possessed them, just like others. However, I do not conclude that these individuals are entirely free from troubling thoughts and vain desires, as if I were placing them above the Apostle himself. The Apostle Paul, for instance, stated that a messenger of Satan (even some thorns of corruption) was sent to buffet him and exclaimed, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin!" Far from suggesting otherwise, I affirm that their purest actions are tainted by corruption, no better than good water running through an unsavory vessel. This applies to

their faith, love, uprightness, mercy, and so on. Now, if God were to scrutinize their faults, even if they managed to avoid gross and filthy uncleanness, how could they withstand it? Not even considering anything worse, but merely their unwillingness and unpreparedness for the duties of their callings, as well as other good works and the weariness associated with them. So, I do not overlook this when speaking of some of God's servants. Whatever I say about them should not lead anyone to conclude that I am equating them with the most exceptional of the Apostles. After all, we know what Paul could say about his joy in suffering, the strangeness and variety of his sufferings, his being caught up into paradise, and hearing things that are not lawful for a man to speak.

These and similar experiences, I believe, were granted to him by God as privileges. It would be sheer arrogance and ostentation for anyone among us to dream of or compare themselves to him, given that our sufferings (speaking of those who have endured the greatest afflictions for the Gospel in our age) have been minor. The other things mentioned, which were revealed to him, are even more extraordinary. However, to have our minds and hearts cleansed and purged from the grip of corrupt lusts, as I described, to have no fellowship with them, and to possess the grace and strength to resist them regularly and usually when they arise, as well as the ability to recognize and avoid them – this is far from being arrogant. In fact, it is unbecoming of the gravity and maturity of fathers in Christ and strong Christians not to have attained this. Just as elderly individuals who have lived long are called fathers due to their age, knowledge, and experience, these individuals are called fathers due to their time and long-lasting commitment to Christ's teachings. Therefore, they should have the wisdom and knowledge needed to navigate the world as a wilderness in safety, withstand the devil's cunning assaults, and also be skilled in setting an example of righteous living for the

younger generation. With their minds established in grace and unburdened by such affections and thoughts, they can rightfully and virtuously engage in their work and dealings, such as laboring, bargaining, traveling, socializing, serving their ruler, and performing other lawful actions. Even in these activities, they will not be disturbed by them, which is something no other individuals can achieve due to the lack of a well-ordered mind, as evident from the complaints of the virtuous and the daily experiences of the wicked. This applies to those with the highest degree and greatest measure of grace among God's children.

The second group of believers can be compared to young men, who are in their prime of strength rather than being either children or old men. Some of God's servants are not yet experienced or thoroughly acquainted with the Christian battle like the fathers, but they are also not completely ignorant like the new Christians. They are especially occupied with fighting against temptations, resisting, and overcoming their unruly desires that pull them in the wrong direction. Therefore, just as young men in their physical prime typically belong to this middle group of Christians if they are genuinely religious, so when Saint John writes to them, he reveals their chief and principal task, which is to resist the devil and his strong assaults. In their youthful and strong state, these assaults are not easily subdued. He persuades them to engage in this combat by not only highlighting the glorious victory it will bring but also by assuring them of victory as if they had already achieved it. These believers, enlightened by the Scriptures and the Commandments, are aware of the corruption in their hearts and the multitude of sinful thoughts and desires within them. They keep watch over their hearts, something they did not do when they were unaware of the danger. They now pray against these sinful inclinations frequently and earnestly, and they are cautious in both company and solitude,

fearing that they may be overcome by such affections. Yet, they are often defeated.

They also consider how to avoid occasions of sin, fearing they may be enticed and troubled in their minds, leading to offenses against their brethren and reproach on their Christian profession. Their hearts now smart and ache from anger, impatience, stubbornness, covetousness regarding their neighbor's possessions, such as a wife or servant, which were once common and enjoyable sins for them. They are now ashamed to have such vices within them and consider it worthwhile to diligently guard against them. Those who understand the benefits of fasting alongside their prayers employ it as needed to more easily purge out the old, sour leaven of sin. They renew their covenants with the Lord to please Him better, especially when they realize they have faltered and strayed from their good intentions, only to become unsettled again. They may be in good condition one day or week, ready to resist any sin, but the next day or week, they become unsettled and sense internal turmoil. They forget their fervent concerns in prosperity but later regret it when they recognize their forgetfulness. In short, they are deeply troubled by their sins but are often overcome by them due to internal temptations and external circumstances. Such a life is undoubtedly a battle and conflict, which, although it may seem miserable, is safe. A life devoid of this struggle is one filled with sorrow and peril.

Furthermore, while they do not neglect their earthly responsibilities, they do not set their hearts most deeply and earnestly upon them. Instead, they frequently focus on what is most essential and valuable, seeking peace between God and their hearts. Due to their ignorance and inexperience in their Christian journey, they are sometimes discouraged by the hardships and difficulties they encounter. However, those who have established a strong foundation overcome

occasional despondency and lethargy, acknowledging and rectifying their weaknesses. They gladly embrace any beneficial means at their disposal, whether public or private, and through such means, they often refresh their minds, dispel weariness, and alleviate the fear and dangers of evil. Based on these characteristics and more, it can be understood how their thoughts are occupied and their hearts are engaged. Although they may not possess the ability and strength to continually and consistently focus their senses and minds on heavenly matters or sense God's guidance as profoundly as others, they take great delight in the good examples of those who lead the way and provide them with light. They strive to emulate these role models just as they follow after Christ.

They have, through God's goodness, managed to prevail somewhat, especially at times, against their strongest corruptions that used to dominate them. They are now earnestly set against smaller sins and those that appear less dangerous, such as idle and unprofitable wanderings of their thoughts. These thoughts do not directly lead them toward evil but hinder them from doing good. They cloud their judgments first and then poison their wills. They may find themselves daydreaming about outward peace, prosperity, long life, pleasure, and profit, often wishing for things that others possess and hold dear. They are sometimes enchanted by these thoughts until they come to their senses, much like the Apostles, who, when they were still weak, dreamed of promotion, an earthly kingdom, and who would be the greatest among their peers. The devil had filled their heads, hearts, and mouths with such fantasies as their chief pleasure.

These thoughts have become ingrained due to custom, and they cannot easily cast them off, even when they recognize the shame and vanity in them. So, much of their mental effort is focused on avoiding being consumed by these thoughts because they obstruct good

meditations and hinder spiritual progress. They find themselves in a constant struggle, sometimes prevailing and other times being overpowered, leading to increased sorrow. However, they may not yet realize the blessing within this struggle, which appears as their greatest misery. In reality, their infirmities are keeping them humble as they recognize their imperfections and corruption. They once naively believed they were free from such corruption, but their current state serves as a reminder of their past bondage to sin. The short-lived mourning over their imperfections will eventually lead to deliverance from this bondage, resulting in great joy and ongoing rejoicing. This stage of growth in Christianity is characterized by a constant struggle between fear and hope, sorrow and joy, rather than complete mastery over unruly affections. It is an estate that requires counsel and assistance rather than the ability to counsel, guide, and stabilize others. The more assured they are of their salvation, the more skilled they become in the battle.

The third group of God's people can be compared to little children. Some are like infants, still in the early stages of their spiritual birth. The Apostle refers to them in Galatians 4:19, saying, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." These young ones, though unaware of it, are dear to God, as explained in the first treatise, and share many traits with other young Christians belonging to this third group. The others in this category are like young children still nursing at their mother's breast. Just as infants grow to recognize their parents, these believers grow to know God and develop a longing for His favor, which is everything to them. Their thoughts are chiefly occupied with seeking His favor, and they find delight in it once they realize its value. They also take pleasure in the means of their spiritual nourishment, namely, the Word of God. Above all, they are concerned about not offending or displeasing God in the slightest way. Saint Peter similarly likens them to young

children, advising them to desire the pure milk of the Word so that they may grow spiritually.

These are the distinct characteristics that are most apparent to both themselves and others. They are often troubled by their lack of stronger faith, thirsting for and delighting in the sense and feeling of God's loving kindness. It is true that they no longer have a strong inclination towards the sins they used to commit. However, this should not be taken as a sign of complete godliness, as they often neglect to recognize and consider how they are tempted and enticed. Their minds are preoccupied with what they most desire, leaving little room for self-examination.

They resemble fresh and inexperienced soldiers who have not yet faced the hardships of battle. When they do recognize that they have offended God, they take it heavily. They diligently follow their calling with cheerfulness as long as their small faith is upheld by clinging to the promise. However, when this promise seems absent, they become despondent and disheartened, especially if the absence of comfort persists for an extended period. These believers are unaware of the great dangers they face due to Satan's malice and cunning, as they lack experience and familiarity with most of the hindrances to their spiritual progress.

One danger is that, when they experience comfort, they might neglect their lawful duties, believing that these duties hinder their spiritual growth. They may think that their business occupies most of their time and prevents them from reading, praying, and contemplating God's love. However, even when they have opportunities for these spiritual activities, they often lack the desire to engage in them fully. This presents an opportunity for Satan to deceive them by appearing as an angel of light.

The second danger is that, when they are devoid of comfort, they may fall into a state of despondency, mistrust, and fear, believing that their previous experiences were mere illusions and dreams. This can lead to temporary despair and later to a spiritually lethargic and complacent conscience, fearing that the Lord will no longer restore the grace they once experienced. Here, Satan reveals himself as a roaring lion. In their weakness, these believers should seek counsel and assistance from others who can provide help and invoke God's aid, as well as attend regular sermons for guidance. They are in a childish state, characterized by numerous follies, weaknesses, gross ignorance, self-deception, fantasies, and oversights. These shortcomings may persist, especially if they are afflicted with melancholy and remain unteachable.

Their previous sinful inclinations may still hold sway and remain difficult to overcome, especially when they experience a period of joy in their salvation but later struggle to occupy themselves with better pursuits. Satan actively seeks to bring them back to their old ways. It is crucial to remember that they are likened to children because they are expected to grow out of childishness and not expect to remain in a state of infancy. God grants them wisdom to understand themselves better each day, preparing them to bear crosses sent for the exercise of their faith and patience gradually. As they grow, they should learn to dislike the faults they discover in themselves and not assume that these faults will be constantly tolerated and overlooked. Their journey in the Christian faith should resemble the growth of a mustard seed, starting small and then progressing from one degree to another. They must remove unbecoming qualities and customs as they identify them. Their ultimate happiness is not to be found on earth, so they should not entertain the illusion of experiencing heaven here. They should not expect the ignorant and wicked world

to commend or admire them because, in fact, they may be despised and hated even by their own flesh due to their profession.

They must now begin to recognize the multitude of fleshly lusts that secretly reside within them. They are more equipped to discern and uncover these hidden desires within themselves than ever before, as the Lord deals with them tenderly, not revealing all at once to avoid overwhelming them. They should also become aware of the numerous afflictions that await them, which could potentially bewilder them. Their focus should not be on finding faults in others, as that form of religiosity is easily adopted, nor should they hold a vain and deceitful hope in their own righteousness, which is as insubstantial as froth. This tendency is especially prevalent when they lack proper guidance. They should not be averse to receiving rebukes, even though it may bruise their pride and expose their blindness. Likewise, they should not consider every virtue within themselves as rare and admirable, while many hidden evils remain unnoticed. Instead, they should hold God's graces in others in reverence, as this can help them become more like those who exhibit such qualities.

Thus, I have outlined to some extent the thoughts, affections, and desires that are typical, for the most part, of the weaker category of God's children concerning matters of the soul. It should be added that these descriptions pertain to the part of their condition that is free from strong and intense temptations. Otherwise, it is best understood from the preceding treatise how they fare. I have partly presented and plainly described the condition of their hearts and partly set it forth in the form of exhortation. What I exhort them to is essentially the anatomy and portrayal of their hearts, except when the devil has cast them into some spiritual sickness, as mentioned earlier. This can happen to many of this weaker sort, as well as to the

other two kinds of believers, wherever he can enter. My point is that God's children, whether weak or strong, do not merely stumble occasionally from the peaceful state they desire to maintain. They are also at risk, without continuous vigilance and frequent earnest prayer, of being sensibly bewildered, as if they don't know where they are, and of being stripped of grace to the point where they feel as though it never existed. I mention this so that readers won't be disheartened if they hear only the best about the state of the godly but don't understand something about the worst. Moreover, even that worst part can be turned to their good, as they will easily perceive with experience over time.

If anyone believes that this last group of God's children, which indeed is the weakest of the three, or either of the other two, is not significantly different from the unregenerate in their thoughts and desires, they must understand that even the most secret hypocrite, who comes closest to being unconverted, is still far from the weakest true Christian. Both distinctions can be observed based on what has been said about them. For example, when a godly person despises themselves the most, they are still far ahead of the best among the unregenerate. The desires and thoughts of God's people, even the weakest, differ significantly from those of the unconverted. This can be seen in their longing for spiritual matters, even when they sometimes stumble. While the affections mentioned for each category are mostly specific to that category, it is important to note that not every action is strictly confined to one category; they may pertain to another as well. None should assume that these meditations and thoughts are the only ones of these believers. Instead, among others, they often have these and similar thoughts occupying their hearts, but they desire them more than they enjoy them. This is in contrast to those who do not partake in the promise of life, as they rarely have any good thoughts. If they do, these

thoughts are fleeting and momentary, often induced by fear or others, and they do not last. These thoughts are not voluntary, as they lack the Spirit of Christ, which is the only source of such thoughts.

To illustrate further, consider the many examples from the Holy Scriptures of those who were weak but became strong, such as Moses, who was initially afraid to confront Pharaoh and preferred someone else to deliver the message. Later, he boldly and thoroughly delivered God's message in His name. Similarly, Peter, who was initially timid and fearful, grew to become unafraid of threats from the high priest. Both of these men were weaker in their earlier stages than they were when they first began. Just as plants, crops, and grasses are initially tender, then grow stronger, and eventually reach full maturity. This should provide a clearer understanding of the thoughts and affections of the three categories of God's children and demonstrate that they are not controlled by their lusts as the unregenerate are, but rather have their hearts engaged in a much more righteous manner.

With this, I will return to the text and connect this passage to the end of the seventh chapter. The previous section was included as a parenthetical aside to address a question posed at the beginning. Having discussed the inward lusts and sins of the heart and demonstrated how they are disapproved and renounced by all true believers, it follows that the same can be proven concerning outward sins in their lives. This will reveal that they have little reason to take pleasure in themselves or to rejoice.

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 is stained with outward wickedness and their holy profession is blemished with open and shameful sins, is vain. This is all the more noteworthy because many boast of having good hearts towards God while their lives are wicked. When Samuel instructed the people to test the sincerity of their repentance, he advised them to put away Balaam and Ashtaroth, referring to their foreign gods and shameful idolatry in which they had delighted. Paul also tells the Corinthians that they must cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh as well as of the spirit. However, I need not dwell on this point further since the entire course of the Scriptures, including both doctrine and examples, as well as common reason, bears witness that none can prove their hearts to be upright if their behavior is offensive and evil.

In terms of doctrine, the words of Saint Peter plainly demonstrate this truth when he states that if a man, after professing a Christian course by acknowledging the forgiveness of his sins and the hope of everlasting life, should yet become entangled again in his old sins and be overcome by them, his latter end will be worse than his beginning. For it would have been better for him never to have acknowledged the way of righteousness than to turn from the commandments given to him. Those who do so are most aptly compared to dogs returning to their vomit and swine that, having been washed, wallow again in the mire. Saint James also boldly proclaims that if the tongue alone is unbridled, even if the rest of a person's life is reformed as best it can be, that one disorder in a man professing the Gospel is enough to testify against him that his

religion is worthless and vain. If his religion is in vain, he can have no part in salvation or godly living. As the Apostle asks, "How can we, which are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" The reason is that those who are dead to sin have so fully partaken of the power, virtue, and grace of Christ that natural corruption has lost its force to produce bitter fruits. Therefore, men cannot profess religion without forsaking their old behavior, and they must strive to live free from offensive evils, always provided that these offensive evils are recognized by the parties as sins.

As for examples, there are many clear instances that plainly illustrate this truth. When Joseph realized that he could not maintain favor with his mistress or continue to enjoy many other liberties in his position unless he defiled his body and yielded to her promiscuous demands, he, being a godly man, refused to consent, even though it resulted in his incurring her complete displeasure and, as far as he could see, perpetual misery. He said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Moses, also a man of God, declined the opportunity to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing instead to suffer a harsh life with the people of God in the wilderness rather than live in sinful pleasures for a season. Zacchaeus, one of the chief tax collectors, notorious among the multitudes as an infamous man to the extent that they were astonished Christ would visit the house of such a wicked man, nevertheless, when Christ converted him, he took action. While Christ was with him that day and had openly declared that he had become a son of Abraham on that very day, he transformed himself. This is a rare sight among those who cling to their possessions and take great delight in them. He turned away from his covetous and miserly heart, as well as his greedy exploitation of others' goods. Even though these possessions had been his delight in the past, to demonstrate how much he now regarded this sin, he gave half of

them to the poor and, as evidence of his remorse, made fourfold restitution to those he had wronged.

Oh, what a worthy example for all oppressors and usurers! Those for whom everything that comes their way is fair game, and who, no matter how much suffering, begging, complaining, and even wasting away in sorrow their actions cause, refuse to relinquish any part of their insatiable greed. They fall short even of Judas the traitor in their avarice. Oh, fortunate Zacchaeus! In such a short time, you learned what many of your companions in sin, just as greedy and merciless toward the poor, as ruthless in taking from others to enrich themselves, will never learn in their entire lives. They truly fulfill the Scripture that says, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." It would be better for them if they could learn from you to curb their voracity and to value less the things that, above all else—even above God Himself, to their own perpetual shame and sorrow—they have made their delight.

But I must continue. To conclude, I will offer no more examples. How powerful is the one of the woman in the Gospel of Saint Luke! She had led a life as notorious as Zacchaeus, yet when she saw her many and grievous sins forgiven, she held her former unchaste life in such abhorrence that, as a sign of her utter rejection of such ungodliness, she used her eyes, which had lured men into impurity, as a basin to wash Christ's feet. She employed her hair, which had been misused for the same purpose, as a towel to wipe His feet. Remarkably, this abhorrence was directed not toward sins that had not greatly tempted her but toward those that had been most deeply ingrained.

Now, if these and many others could not tolerate their sins, which they had loved by nature and in which they had long indulged, we need not doubt that they were much further from embracing other sins that were less tempting to them. It can be safely concluded that believers in Christ forsake their old sins, no matter how enjoyable they may have once been.

Chap. 10.

Of four sorts of those who hope for salvation, yet do not renounce open sins and outward offenses.

But we need not dwell at length on this matter that the servants of God have indeed cast off outward sins. What should be chiefly considered here is that there are many who appear godly but are not. I deem it necessary to warn the Christian reader about this so that he may be more cautious and avoid being counted among them. I categorize them into four specific types. The first are flagrant transgressors, individuals whom every vile person, knowing them to have put on a greater façade of godliness than the common lot (though they are not beacons of righteous living), views with scorn and finds ample reason to do so, considering them to be deceivers. Once a profane person discerns their hypocrisy and shallowness of heart through openly and frequently committed sins, he distances himself further from showing them any respect, which he had accorded them previously. In fact, he holds Christian religion itself in lower esteem on account of their behavior. I will not deny that, given his shame, if anyone indeed walks sincerely and without just cause for reprimand, he remains unmoved by their example, does not greatly revere them, derives no benefit from them, but rather reproaches them. This is because he has witnessed so many who, apart from some outward display of zeal, were little more gracious in their lives or better than himself. Therefore, he has grown hardened to think the same of all the rest. Though this willful blindness and hardness of heart, being a fearful sign of God's judgment upon him, reveals that God has given him over to the desires of his own heart, in the interim, this can largely be justly attributed to the lives of

those who, while professing godliness, contradicted it through their actions and were far from what they purported to be.

The cursed manner of life of those who have led others into the most perilous falls testifies and condemns them. They are enemies to their own souls and fall far short of the people they appear to be. Seldom have I seen such individuals reformed from their evil habits and courses after they have persisted in them for a long time. Their lives and deaths typically align, offering little prospect for change. The only benefit that can be derived from them is a cautionary one, so that those who knew them might beware of their example. When their behavior is so flagrant that despite the appearance of religiosity, they are justly criticized among the irreligious, it would have been better if they had never made any profession at all. This can be seen in the case of Saul, who, despite offering sacrifices to the true God, performed deeds that were detestable in the eyes of the wicked world (1 Samuel 22:18) and that not even the vilest of his servants could be persuaded to approve and partake in, save one—cursed Doeg the Edomite.

To the aforementioned group, if we add three other kinds of sinful individuals, it will become evident that countless people live among good Christians and are even considered as such, at least by themselves. Yet, they have not renounced open and apparent sins. The first of these three kinds includes the common and unrefined people, who are typically as ignorant as they are coarse and uncivilized. They fear no consequences, and their own words reveal their true nature. When reproached, their defense is that their hearts are as virtuous as those of the best men, even though they cannot speak eloquently about religion or put on the same outward displays as many others. As for their lives, they believe they serve God as Christian people should, attend church, and avoid associating with

anyone who holds false opinions. They claim to have the goodwill of their neighbors and assert that they could garner the support of many for their honesty.

They do admit to having a naturally bad temper, which occasionally leads to anger, reviling, and seeking revenge when provoked. They also acknowledge that some people are so evil that they can never be on good terms with them. They concede that their marriages are not always harmonious but maintain that conflicts do not last long, although they do occur frequently. They are grateful that they have never had to involve their neighbors in reconciling them with their spouses. They argue that even the best couples have disagreements at times.

They allow their servants and children to do as they please and go where they want on Sundays and some other days, as long as they attend to their duties. If they happen to curse, swear, or use profanity, they claim that they were provoked to do so. They do not particularly enjoy singing psalms, praying, or reading in their homes, as they prefer to hear their own minister conduct a service or listen to a good preacher.

They insist that they are not habitual gamblers, but they do indulge in games after work when they have congenial company, particularly on Sundays outside of service hours. They contend that in this harsh world, they are compelled to mix inferior goods with the good ones and resort to deceitful practices in their business dealings to survive. If someone tells them that God will cast sinners like them into hell for their wicked lives, they respond with hope that they serve God as well as others in most respects. They say, "God have mercy on us if we are damned for such things, and we repent when we have sinned. We cannot be saints here, but we will align our will with God's. What

we cannot do, we hope Christ has done for us. Even if the worst should happen, and if we have just one hour to repent before we die, we trust we will do well enough."

These, along with many similar remarks that reveal their hearts and their relationship with God, are fully consistent with the way they lead their lives. Consequently, anyone judging based on Scripture will consider them far from attaining eternal life. Nevertheless, despite their gross and unrefined nature, there are individuals who should tell them the unvarnished truth. Instead, they fill these individuals with hope of salvation, even though they are in such a perilous state. They deceive themselves to such an extent that they need to be dislodged from their delusions by all possible means, rather than being encouraged in their erroneous beliefs. This situation is reminiscent of the passage in the Book of Jeremiah where it says, "They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace." Alas, the apostle could hardly say that someone burdened with such sins could attain to the crown of glory in the Lord's kingdom, even if he runs well.

If anyone wonders why I am listing this catalog of wicked qualities, please understand that I am trying to prove that a life filled with gross iniquities cannot be the life that God will accept. Yet, many thousands believe otherwise, and their opinion is most welcomed by the people I have described. Given this, I felt it necessary to use this opportunity to dissuade such ignorant individuals, who, in my view, lack a good conscience, from their audacity.

Furthermore, I would like to urge others who might not express themselves as rudely and plainly as the previously mentioned individuals but are more subtle in deceiving themselves. I want them to consider my words if their lives are corrupted and tainted by such

offenses and yet they insist on hoping and trusting for salvation. It is to be feared (and therefore I consider this warning not in vain) that many will be quick to laugh when they hear the bluntness of their speech, even though they themselves are so similar in character.

But let me continue: There is a third group that comes even closer to a godly life and might feel unjustly accused if they are not considered as such. These individuals, because they maintain some level of moral integrity and are relatively free from gross offenses, believe themselves to be among the best examples of righteous living. They scoff at accusations, even though their visible faults are numerous. Although God sufficiently condemns them by stating that harlots will enter His kingdom before them, they remain heedless to His Word. To expose them further, He allows some of them to fall into despair, drown themselves, or meet miserable fates, all in the hope of bringing the rest to repentance. They delude themselves into thinking they live righteously, but the Scriptures clearly reveal their shortcomings. Our Savior speaks of such when He tells His disciples in Matthew 5:20, "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

It pains me to say it, but as far removed as these individuals are from God's kingdom, they surpass the two previous groups, who consider themselves righteous. Many may perish as a result. Yet, occasionally, some among all these three groups are troubled in conscience and deeply disturbed by their sins. This is a rare occurrence and is not easily induced even through frequent and sound teaching. However, this turmoil is often a fear of punishment, leading them to confess their sins and shed tears. They may even temporarily abandon some of their old sinful habits, leaving observers astonished, much like John the Baptist when he saw the Pharisees come for his baptism.

Yet, this external change is only temporary and stems from a slavish fear. In their distress, they seek the Lord, but not with the determination of those who truly desire to find Him. If they were earnest, they would persist until they found Him, as the church does in the Song of Solomon 3:3-4. Moreover, they do not remain faithful to His ways once their distress subsides, as described by Job when speaking of hypocrites. They pray to God only when afflicted, but not continually or consistently throughout their lives, whether in times of peace or trouble.

Specifically, when God smites and afflicts them, whether through enemies, diseases, losses, or similar hardships, they make religious vows to remain faithful to Him. They flatter God with their words and feign loyalty to His covenant, but their hearts are not sincere, and they lack fidelity. They are quick to point out the faults of others, even when they are trivial or merely perceived as such in their opinion. They act as if they cannot tolerate any dishonor to God, yet they themselves reject reproof and loathe correction. While they display zeal in some matters, their fervor is inconsistent and marked by other passions, revealing their lack of genuine godliness.

They willingly listen to the word of God at times, and some even speak of it with joy, marveling at its heavenly wisdom. However, their interest fades away quickly, unlike the seed that takes root in good soil and bears fruit. They receive many good gifts from God, making it seem as though they are close to eternal life. Yet, they either hoard these gifts without putting them to use or misuse them, using them as a license to sin boldly against God, daring to offend Him more than if they had not received these gifts.

If I were to enumerate the extensive list of gross faults that they tolerate within themselves, these faults, often passed off as mere

infirmities, would clearly indicate to those knowledgeable in Scripture that they cannot be considered among the believers and beloved of the Lord. Although God gathers His elect from various backgrounds, none of these individuals can be truly His until they renounce and forsake such sins. Believers must distance themselves from these faults.

A fourth group, distinct from those mentioned earlier, deserves reproach similar to the previous groups. You can identify them by the characteristics I will describe. If they do not repent, they will ultimately prove no better than the others. Among them are those who appear to be among the more zealous but dangerously offend. They allow their flaws to manifest in their demeanor, speech, and behavior, particularly when they disapprove of others who may be more righteous than themselves. Their actions reveal that their hearts are corrupted in God's eyes. Despite their zeal for worship, they hold themselves in such high regard that they cannot tolerate or extend Christian kindness to those who differ in judgment, even if their stance lacks clear biblical support. When in disagreement with anyone, regardless of their honesty and godliness, they cannot interact without ridicule, scorn, harsh rebukes, or insults, often defacing and defaming them uncharitably when they are absent, even without just cause. Some of them are private individuals, though some may be in the ministry, but they take it upon themselves to sharply criticize and arrogantly pass judgment on their superiors. This zealous, judgmental spirit has led many to become outright schismatics, while others are not far from that path. I feel compelled to rebuke this type of zealous professor because some have mistaken me for supporting them. I have welcomed their readiness to embrace the Gospel and have encouraged it to the best of my ability. However, I strongly disapprove of their arrogant, bold, and uncharitable spirit, which has produced the aforementioned

fruit, a product of teachings never imparted by any sound ministry. I have disapproved of this behavior since I developed the ability to discern such matters. While I was content to be taught for several years, recognizing its necessity, I have observed that these individuals, in a few years, or even months, have come to believe that none of their teachers are good enough or sufficient for them. They claim to rely on private reading to grow in their faith when they could have also learned in the public assembly but refuse to do so, especially when the ministry is led by someone they oppose. In serving their own cantankerous inclinations, they sin against God by breaking one of the greatest commandments. These are just a few examples of their other similar qualities. Is this the behavior expected of true Christians?

To whom can we attribute those individuals who claim to be zealous, yet live disorderly lives without engaging in any honest trade? They are idle and unprofitable, busybodies who consider it godly to speak of others' faults. They often speak to please those in their company, not inadvertently or occasionally, but frequently and without genuine repentance (for they would otherwise amend their ways). How can they be deserving of the name of reverent Christians or be accounted as such? When those who wish to appear more zealous than others fail to live without offense and, in their dealings with one another, act worse than those who have no religion, it brings disgrace upon them. Contentious words, bitterness, public quarrels, unseemly boasting, casting one another's faults in each other's faces, spreading tales of wrongs suffered, and rejoicing when those they dislike fall are all too common. There are obstinate and churlish responses, always assuming the worst, showing no willingness to compromise or extend mercy to those in their midst. What kind of religion do they possess when they want to be seen as earnest believers yet exhibit duplicity in their actions, speaking differently to different people at

different times, lacking in straightforwardness, and forsaking their clear duties for the sake of personal gain? They dare to indulge in unchaste looks, opening the door to defile their bodies, nurturing temptations, albeit less openly than others, through company, conversation, amorous glances, and lascivious stage-plays. To conclude, they possess other negative qualities, albeit more subtly concealed and hidden, which render their hope of serving God, whether through prayer, hearing the word, or any other virtuous deed, deceptive. They are grossly culpable of great ungodliness, a far cry from the life of a true Christian who has purged such vices from their life and renounced them.

Now, if this group (partly mentioned before and partly to be mentioned) who, for certain religious duties they perform, come closest to leading a godly life (as there is no doubt they do), still fall short of it and have little part in it, there is no need to demonstrate how much further others (of any profession) are from it. I am referring to Papists, the Family of Love, and similar sects, who are no better than concealed atheists. I shall remain silent about them as it is unnecessary.

In conclusion, for the benefit and improvement of those who are guilty of these offenses, and to summarize what I have said about renouncing both inward and outward evils, let me say this: if in any way I can help them realize how detestable their condition is (and I say this out of compassion for them), then neither the inward rebellious desires I have mentioned nor the outward behavior I have described befit a Christian. As long as the Lord requires His people to have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness but to cleanse themselves from all that is evil, both in soul and body, it will be a disgrace for all who bear the name of Christians to either harbor such corruptions in their hearts or be defiled by such treachery in

their lives. Considering the clear revelation of God's will, it is astonishing, particularly among those who claim to be zealous, that we should find it harsh and distasteful to examine ourselves so thoroughly. Yet the Lord, through the prophet, demands that this be done repeatedly, saying, "Fan yourselves, fan yourselves, O nation not worthy to be loved" (Zephaniah 1). It is evident in the better individuals among those mentioned earlier that there is little moderation of their affections and unbridled desires in their daily lives, leading to a lack of well-ordered governance and hasty and indiscreet actions, which, aside from offending God and others, often result in bitter repentance, if any repentance at all.

Bear with me, gentle Reader, although I delve deep and linger long in these matters. It may be that some will find more benefit in hearing about them, causing their hearts to soften more than they ever could through committing them. There is such stubbornness, heartburning, and intense quarreling among people over trivial matters. They exhibit such zeal in their worldly dealings and yet display a lack of vitality and little courage when it comes to matters of the soul. They are nimble and tireless in one aspect and tedious and wearisome in the other. Observing their conduct in both realms, one might think that the issues they contend over are matters of life and death, while the others are trivial and of little consequence. They are merciless toward the poor and needy in their sales, contracts, and other dealings, especially when they refuse to yield or give up even the smallest portion of what is rightfully theirs, regardless of the other party's dire circumstances. Who can contemplate this without lamentation?

In their merrymaking, they allow themselves to speak freely about anything, as long as it is not blatantly impious, even if it is unedifying or sets a harmful example. Yet, they should remember that for every

idle word, they will be held accountable. Such times of friendly gatherings should be used to draw each other closer to God and to strengthen one another in their most holy faith. They should also use these occasions to provoke one another to love. Among those who are heads of households, there is an unsettling amount of unrest and complaints about trivial matters, such as minor losses and inconveniences within and outside the home, caused by neighbors or servants. Their own unruly hearts and impatience often magnify these losses far beyond their actual significance. They should have learned to be prepared for such trials and tribulations. I am referring to professed Christians. Let those who exceed these failings not take too much pride in themselves.

There are disputes and failures in fulfilling duties between husbands and wives. There is frequent contention, even over minor disagreements, leading to resentment, heartburning, alienation, bitterness, and, at times, even physical separation. These disputes must often be debated at length before they are forgotten and resolved. Can you imagine how common this is, and how deeply it ought to be deplored? Even in cases where couples get along better, it is disheartening to see how little they benefit each other spiritually in their relationship with God. Their knowledge, faith, improvement, meekness, patience, prayer, conversation, and mutual encouragement should be helping each other grow, but it is often not the case. Isn't it worth lamenting that they do not devote themselves to such things as they should, considering that weightier matters should always be at hand? The former is often deemed unnecessary to discuss because it is believed that occasional conflicts are inevitable and cannot be avoided.

Furthermore, those who receive the Gospel with approval often succumb to the pride of life, which is the most effective poison for

others. They find solace in the material pleasures, prosperity, and comforts of this world, which they may lose at any moment. They delight in ease and prosperity, in their spouses, children, friends (indeed, great blessings), and in what they possess. They adorn themselves extravagantly, thinking that this makes them superior to others and believing that others admire them as much as they admire themselves. They fill their hearts with these worldly pleasures, pleasing themselves in them, not until they displease God, but until they are consumed by their love for them. Their religion is so weakened and cooled by this that it is evident they prefer darkness to light and pleasures to God, even though they continue to adhere to the Gospel to avoid exposing their iniquity. As many have confessed, and I hope that some may be admonished to remember, consider, and confess, they have offended in some of these areas. Their consciences accuse them that the life they lead is not the one God requires, and these are not the works that faith produces. It is not self-denial to give in to their every heart's desire or lustful eye. It is not taking up their cross daily, which means accepting the troubles that God sends their way, without which they cannot follow Christ or be His disciples.

What should I say about those who boldly declare that they will not tolerate sin in anyone, not even their own children, to avoid offending God, yet will side with them when they have done wrong and support them, even to the offense of many? Such people are a great source of distress for those who witness those under their authority not only indulging in worldly pleasures at times when they should be serving God but also allowing them to steal from their neighbors. They tolerate their insolence, stubbornness, and mischief, burdening others with intolerable weight until they are outwitted by the most ancient elders. Eventually, they come to a fearful end, causing great sorrow and grief to their parents. But alas, what is the

point of complaining, I say again, not about irreligious, profane, and ignorant individuals, but about those who sincerely seek salvation? If I do not remove my pen from the paper, I could go on indefinitely. I have not even touched upon the hollowness in friendships among Christians as they are commonly perceived. Their love is often tainted with much dissimulation, only evident in words, not in heart and deed. Their fair words and appearances are hardly trustworthy because, following the world's fashion, their affections change from what they have promised. I have not yet mentioned many of the strong corruptions and open rebellions that manifest in some Christians, including those who hold no common hope among their brethren. I have hardly touched on the deadly suspicions and harsh judgments they hold against many who are better than themselves, dominating and condemning them in an imperious and masterful manner, even though they are unworthy to be associated with them. Yet we are instructed not to have too many masters. These faults are often committed without provocation, which makes their sin even more significant. Even when there is a reason, gentleness and leniency, which should be present in all reprovers, could easily resolve the issues. Forward and uncharitable condemnation does no good and is a poison that dwells, especially in the schismatics of our time and those who have leaned in that direction. If they had not deluded themselves into believing they were more zealous than others, they would have mitigated the bitterness in their hearts with humility and love, regardless of their own opinions. But here, I shall end these matters.

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 methinks 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 shoale 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 shoale 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 smallie 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 others 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 repentings, till God change their hearts indeed, 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, than all other) he was found to give himself the bridle of unlawful liberty, and to shake 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 another. 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, Prover. 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 than 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 others 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 than 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 Peter's 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 than 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 than 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 than 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 harbouring 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 than 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 devil's 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, than 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 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 than others are. And hereof it is, that many have been overtaken, and often 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 spoke before? No, nothing less: for either they are wary and watchful against them, beforehand, lest 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 immediately, bewail it, and are much humbled to see how they have been circumvented, and cannot be quiet, while seeing God offended, they 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 newborn, 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 haled to the committing of them, but that they were weak to perform that, which fain they would have done. I say, who does 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 an 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, than 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, nor 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, who 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 are 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, lest 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 its good plight afterward.

Now I having shown how God makes the heart new, and changes it, before it is fit to be employed in well-doing, and in bringing forth

fruits of amendment; and also how it, being changed, renounces 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 afterward, 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 while 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, lest 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 sets 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 has taught the same: that the servant of God, who has 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 are 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 need to fear, nor 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 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 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 are 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 does not see that the stubbornest and wilfullest heart which has 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 Christian's sake) when a man has 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 has his heart humbly turned towards God again to love and delight in him: who does 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 does 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 causes 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 has 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 tuchie, 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 than 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 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 suchlike, will anyone 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 causes 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 others do.

And yet for all that has been said, I deny not, but that the dearest children of God may possibly, nay easily, as we have seen, and are at sometime held 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, than 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 anyone gather, that I do make so light a matter of sin (while I thus speak) as though I thought, it might be shaken off as a burr hanging on our garment; which the Holy Ghost says, cleaves 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 seemly to discern, and weak to resist: yet this I must say, that the mighty Lion of the tribe of Judah is stronger, and Christ gives wisdom to find out his subtleties: and greater is the spirit of God which is in us, if we confidently believe and trust thereto, than the sin which deceives and entices 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 growings cannot be great) yet it is most certain, that where these things are often taught, and understood, it shall go far better with them than with others. And they shall with ease get victory over their special corruptions, as sloth, distrust, and such like: whereas 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 does 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 governance, therefore, as every one 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 overcomes 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 forth to annoy them. The good treasury of the heart if it were carefully kept, would bring forth better things. If you ask what; my meaning is, not, that only in the exercises of religion, such 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 buyings and sellings, 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 Edomites. God of his singular love (I confess) restrains 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 a well-governed heart) 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 foul 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 takes us, as it is too common, so it is most dangerous; and suffers not Christians to see, much less to enjoy one half of the sweetness, which God bequeaths 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 comes, go to the Church when the Sabbath comes, to fast when Lent comes, and repent when death comes. And so the wisdom of the flesh counsels 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 commands, 1 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 has 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 than 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 pleases him to ask our hearts, as he does,

when he says, 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 throughout 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 irreverence: 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 assuaged 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 and hold in our intemperate lusts, and evil desires, that they do not break out into further ungodliness, is, that our hearts be first purified through believing that our sins are forgiven us, and we are made partakers of Christ's 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,

however little the heart is looked after, shall reap a slight fruit of their travail; neither lead the life which is approved of God (as has been said) nor find the comfort which they imagine they shall have, at least which they hear, to be granted by the Lord. But it comes to pass, as it is written, that as they serve him, so he serves 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 appears in time of need) as they give to him a false worship. It is profitable for us to weigh this: for such as cry out against us, as Precisians, for teaching and urging this, often prove, to their cost and shame, that they would have been happy if they could have received this our doctrine, however they reproach and speak ill of our living. Who should not have branded themselves with sins, that they could never afterward wear out the stain of them anymore; if they had been as the strictest Precisians before.

It has been shown, 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 imperfectly, and in part, our desires therefore cannot be (in the perfect and best Christians) altogether good and pleasing to God, but imperfect: that is to say, many of them evil, and many which are holy, yet mixed with evil and corruption. Whereby it comes to pass, that the holiest servants of God, both carry about them the noisome remnants of sin while 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 strictly 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 lest 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 between 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, than the whole world: and what marvel if the overcoming of malice, and revenge (but one affection) be of greater value, than the winning of a City? Proverb. 16.32. And whereas they think there is no difference between 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 who lacks 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 requires of thee, whoever you are, who look for salvation at his hands, being a believer in Christ's: that is, that you should renounce the evil lusts which swarm everywhere in the world, and the ungodly life following the same: and how this should be

done, and how far you may attain hereunto, even so far as human frailty will permit, and not as the unbelievers: only be sure that you have this in some measure wrought in you in truth. But in all this you have 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 has been nothing said of the manifold points of duty on the other side, and of the goodness which is to be found in us, and in which, God's people must shine as lights unto the world: For this is the glory and beauty of a man, as Solomon says: 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 brings forth fruits of amendment, and consists in the doing of good works, I am now to entreat and speak. And as this is more difficult to attain to, than the other: (as hard as that is) so it is far more precious, and beautiful to be doing good, than to avoid evil; though he is a rare person, 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 has 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, yes see no great evil in them, may know, that if they are 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) than I must needs.

First then, I will set down some general rules to direct you 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, does 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 you rules which shall help you to practice the godly life, mark them well: for because this point is not well learned, therefore many who would gladly live well, attain to it in no good sort to bring it in credit with others, but meet with many unsettlings, discouragements, and coolings of their zeal, yes oftentimes 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 whereunto 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 teaches. 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 often and diligently commends 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 set about to practice therein, must needs have some clear and good understanding of those things which pertain to the same; so much more in this practice of Christian duties, it is requisite, that he who believes in God (for such a one only can be a practitioner 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 endowed with the greatest measure of it already: and he may not be discouraged that has any true measure of it at all. This knowledge, S. Peter says, 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 says: If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.

This heavenly understanding, if it be loved and delighted in by us, and desired as gold, and sought after as silver, and not weighed and esteemed by 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's palace) which is far more precious than the knowledge itself, and will most certainly follow the same. Therefore Solomon says: If knowledge once enters into thine heart, and wisdom delights 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 than 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 who 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 others) yea, a far more hard and difficult matter, than 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, than such as want them.

But yet this I say, that many who have them, have not therewith that which gives an edge to them, and which makes them profitable, sweet, and precious both to themselves and others: they have not the salt of grace, which only makes them savory, nor the love which only makes them fit to edify (whereas knowledge without it, puffs 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 are content, yes glad to be led in their daily conversation by the light and help of the same; they have no other fruit of it than 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 who labor faithfully to make conscience of that

which they know. And I say with the Psalmist, that he who has fewer gifts of understanding, so as he lives after them which he has, is wiser than they: for thus he says: Thou hast made me wiser than my teachers, than 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 mere 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 of 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 the resolution of our minds, and the desire and purpose of heart, we do it (Psalms 119:10, Acts 11:23). Outward, when in our lives we express and declare the same in our walking (Acts 9:31).

But to begin with the first. We must have our hearts prepared and ready to be set to 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 which, no good can be well done. But when we have such control 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 hinders us therein, the members and powers of our minds shall be ready to put in use and practice the same.

Therefore, this inward readiness of the mind and fervent desire of the heart (we see) must be kindled in us and nourished as a spark or coal of fire, so that, as it may be obtained, there may be some ability and strength thereto. For which cause, the Lord requires 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 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 becomes their actions, who have obtained it of God and testify it throughout the course of their lives. For when men understand that God has 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 leads thereto. And yet if the zeal of God's house consumes them, as the Prophet says 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, 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) does warrant us not only that our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away the guilt and punishment of our sin, and imparted to us and freely given 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 weakened in us through infirmity, we ought to stir up ourselves with cheerful confidence to recover 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 helps 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 are 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 sanctity 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 what the Apostle to the Romans means when he says: "Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof, neither give 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 who 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, etc. that so we should be his wholly: and in one part of our life, as well as another, do that which pleases him.

No man doubts 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 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, desire, and do any good thing, especially because God commands it, 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 those who have long pleased themselves therein, at length, to cry out against their doings (though admirable in the eyes of others) and to say they were but hypocrisy.

There are many lurking holes in the den of our hearts, and many ways we can deceive ourselves, that the good which we do is not as it seems: but as it is not all gold that glitters, so the touchstone of God's word does 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 oftentimes to be earnest in good causes, and to further them, for the friendship of others, and for company's sake; also for malice, for our own benefit, vain glory, and for fear of some severe 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 regards; and that partly for the commandment of God: but not

only, nor resolutely for that, but more for other considerations than that: Therefore, we are found to be other than 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 long as we are 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 of 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 by some who 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 equally requisite in both: and that we show integrity in the practice of good duties as well as in the forsaking of evil. And thus, with the rules, I have set down one of the virtues, namely uprightness, which is necessary to be learned and kept by all such as, having obtained the gift of true faith, set themselves to lead a godly life: I say, such as have true faith because no others have any possibility to enter and set upon it. And if you think to set upon the godly life without it, you shall offer to God a broken piece of work: no better than the offering of Cain; although it shall seem to yourself to be as holy as the sacrifice of Abel.

But if you have tasted aright of this gift of faith, and then, going about to lead a godly life, you being soundly instructed in these rules before set down, and persuaded that they, with the virtues here added, must guide and help you 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, make the workman fit to use and practice it) you shall find great ease, not only in withstanding the deceitful baits of sin, but also constantly break through many and diverse hindrances which you shall meet with, that they shall not withhold you from going forward in your 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 makes 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 has 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 has prepared for the safekeeping of his, I refer the reader thither for a more satisfying understanding of this matter. Only one or two objections, which may arise from the doctrine which I have set down, shall be more fittingly answered here.

CHAP. 14:

Answering Objections and Discussing Virtues Essential to Godly Living

Firstly, some object that although there is often a strong desire to do what pleases God, they find no strength to perform it. Furthermore, they cite the Apostle Paul's own complaint, "to will is present with me, but I find no way to accomplish that which I desire." I will not respond as some devout Jesuits do, suggesting that God gives his grace and we may receive it if we wish, without assurance of his favor by faith. This would be mere mockery, leading people to seek something with wearisome effort that they can never possibly find. Instead, I say, if you earnestly desire this (as Paul did), God's grace shall be sufficient for you.

Moreover, if you fervently desire to overcome evil and do what you know is good, but your heart is not possessed with the favor of God and remains wavering on the matter, your desire is not the kind I spoke of and cannot help you as you wish; it lacks the fruit of faith. For it is faith alone that overcomes all obstacles in the world. It is through faith that we are persuaded that Christ Jesus loves us so much that he is ready to do anything expedient for us. Because of his great favor toward us, we are made able and in him, we can do all things that are expedient for us.

Regarding the objection about Paul's struggle with the rebellion of the old man, his corrupt nature, it is true that he did not fully and perfectly overcome it. This was so that he would always have a reminder of his unworthiness and sin, and thus remember that he was pardoned only by mercy and kept from falling away by the grace of God. For these reasons, he remained humbled under the great grace he had received. Although he was not perfect like an angel, he was not carried away by his lusts into gross iniquity. It was necessary

for him to be grieved by even the smallest rebellion against goodness and feel some unfitness to his calling at times. Yet, God's grace was sufficient to keep him from falling into the depths of sin that he might have.

But I have effectively addressed this issue on another occasion. Now, to apply this to ourselves and not be satiated with it as many are, I say that we, likewise, through the same grace to our extent, may look with good cheer to be delivered from yielding to our wicked lusts, which most dangerously encumber us, just as Paul was delivered from his. We should resolve that our most loving Father, for the tender care he has over us, is always looking down from heaven, beholding those who are upright-hearted towards him (however weak they may be), so that he may show himself strong towards them and thereby supply their weakness. Thus, with the desire to maintain a godly course firmly rooted in us and proceeding from faith, who doubts that it may have the strength to perform outward duties as required, albeit weakly? We should endeavor at least (which God will accept) even if we do not always prevail over such strong corruptions that often master us due to lack of such grace. However, in speaking thus, I outline what God's children may confidently expect, not what everyone attains. Except for the sin of incontinence, for which God has provided a lawful remedy, we have both promise from God and, by the power of our faith, we enjoy victory over other sins, allowing us to walk without just reproof amongst men and maintain our peace toward him. Additionally, when we are craftily deceived by the incessant malice of the devil (though not without our own sloth, sleepiness, and security), we have access, as in times past, and recourse to God through the means of our advocate, and we regain our hope and foothold.

Thus, I have shown how those who have the will and desire for good may also expect strength to perform, to some extent, the duties that seem so difficult and impossible to them, so they need not be greatly troubled by that objection. However, there are many, even among the supporters of Christian religion, who never find or feel the same. Because many of God's dear servants often do not experience this and cannot say that they feel it, but instead complain that their life is full of disquiet because they cannot overcome anger, impatience, rage, stubbornness, and the like, nor live godly to their satisfaction, even though they desire it, they may be discouraged by this doctrine. I want them to understand that in the previous response to the last objection, I have not described what every godly Christian does or will feel (as I mentioned before), but rather what God, in his abundant generosity, has provided for them to feel and experience, and how their condition may be improved and their spiritual freedom enlarged.

Furthermore, many good people take a long time to realize what God has bequeathed to them. Indeed, many of them never grasp even one of the many sweet liberties and privileges of God's children. They only receive as much light from the Father of Light (and are therefore rightly called the children of light) as enables them to see the way to his kingdom. They declare and demonstrate his will in their lives according to the knowledge they have of it, but not as much as they could or as some others do.

Now, to proceed to the other virtues that enhance our practice of a godly life: those who receive and desire to attain the grace I have mentioned—that is, to be more sound and better settled in a holy course—must be glad with all their hearts to be diligent and laborious in the Lord's work and to remain steadfast therein. By these two virtues, they can nourish all good desires and holy

endeavors once planted in them, and resist the contrary while they are not yet greatly troubled by them, and put their knowledge into practice so that it may be evident whose servants they are.

This diligence and constancy, in whatever they are used, bring about great things, whether it be in any trade or in the pursuit of things obscure and hard to discover, when only the light of reason is followed. And who doubts then, but that in holy duties, wherein men are guided by the spirit of God, most excellent effects are brought forth? Indeed, no duty is well performed without them. For this reason, Saint Peter, speaking of the godly life, teaches that all diligence must be added to it: "Give all diligence," he says, "to join with your faith virtue," as if he should say, that all is lost without it. Jeremiah also says that he is cursed who does God's business negligently. Regarding constancy, what does Saint James say? "He that looks into the perfect law of liberty and abides therein, if he be not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, shall be blessed in his deed," that is, in his conduct.

Therefore, by the first of these two virtues, namely, diligence, let them be ready to seize all occasions and opportunities to do good, and to avoid idleness and unprofitableness, so that they may bring forth much fruit, redeeming the time wisely while they can, and with a thousand times more gain than others do. Let them not pass it over idly and unprofitably, pleasing and satisfying their foolish appetite for the present time.

By the second, namely, constancy and perseverance, let them not only maintain their hearts and lives in the same good state that they have already nurtured through diligence, but also become more fruitful and enlarge their hearts, becoming daily followers of every good work until their latter years are better than the former, and

until they finish their course with joy. Once acquainted with the gain that these virtues bring, they shall act like merchants who, having their minds set upon their advantage, do not allow themselves to chase after pleasures but diligently pursue their trade, which brings in profit. Thus, whatever part of the Christian life they are engaged in, holding these virtues as their companions, they may count it the most happy time. For in doing so, they wean their hearts and minds from much dross and worldly lusts, which would greatly harm them if lodged there, and thereby they are much more readily disposed to duty than those who do not embrace them. Those who are content with any uncertain and deceivable persuasion of God's favor and refuse to be held within the narrow confines of this holy and Christian counsel, that is, of progressing by diligence and constancy in their course, often break out to their trouble, danger, and discredit, while the others remain quiet and merry. And because they consider it bondage to be held in such a manner, they find that they pay dearly for their liberties when they are later constrained to repent seeking them, and yet cannot easily recover their inner peace lost for them, nor shake them off again when they would gladly do so.

Due to the lack of these two virtues and through the contrary, sloth and inconstant unsettledness, most of the godly do not find the sweet fruit in their lives, namely, safety under God's protection from time to time. Instead, by their imprudence and weariness of well-doing, they gradually plunge themselves into deep unsettledness, from which it is hard to arise again. Therefore, Solomon has aptly expressed them both in two words, 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, we should be readily prepared, as we ought, to practice good and resist evil, whereas slackness and lack of care, or too little care, are condemned. By the other, we may continually go forward in doing good and fleeing evil, wherein all staying, fickleness, or going backward, is very dangerous. To this belong the words to the Corinthians: "Awake to live righteously, and sin not," and he adds, "Be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: knowing that your labor is not in vain." And further: "Watch, stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, and be strong." And this is necessary above all things, that we may become that simplicity which is fitting for those who are in Christ.

Now, that this diligence and care in all good duties ought to be for continuance, even while life lasts, let us know that the Lord commands it to all his children, according to what is written: "He that abides 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 says by the Apostle: "He that has begun this good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Also to the Thessalonians: "Faithful is he that has called you, which will also do it." If it be asked how he will enable them, seeing there are many fears in their life of final falling away, the same Apostle answers 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, & 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 Saint John speaks to the same purpose, thus: "Greater is he that is in you (that is, the spirit of God) than 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 says: "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 shown throughout the whole discourse of the godly life, that it must be continued to the end: I cease now to say anymore.

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 has 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 befit a man of God, so far as human frailty will allow. Herein, because we follow Christ Jesus himself, we must know that all our duties must be practiced in humility and meekness. For so he says, 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 others ye be obedient, ye can never live godly, as God requires 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 oftentimes set down together in the Scriptures, 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 has not these, they shall lose their credit and beauty among those who behold them, and withhold their commodity from him who lacks them.

And these two are not particular virtues that may only sometimes have use, but such fruits of the spirit as are necessarily required in all actions, so that at no time humbleness of mind and meekness of spirit may be lacking. 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 placed out of context. But I set them down here, seeing the former part of this treatise was so large. And that which I have said on this matter, I wish to be well observed, that the life of the believer is a continual proceeding in departing from evil and endeavoring after duties in such a manner as has been said: a settled course in repentance and a constant walking with God; not an idle or uncertain stumbling upon some good actions while a great part of his life is neglected and not looked after. He must not be sometimes at command and ready to offer his service to God in some good mood, and afterward 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 attending at table and on horseback, the attenders may run where they will; but it is like 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 afterward. So our Savior teaches it should be with his servants, as with a servant in a family: who, when he has wrought in the field, is not immediately discharged of other duties, but then does 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 toil and tediousness. For so has 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, however they can have a place sometime in earthly government, are expelled from there. And this is what Saint Peter warns us, that we be neither idle nor barren, which we shall avoid if we are 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 has many sins to weed out and to labor against, and therefore not carelessly to mar all his work in an hour that he has well followed sundry days, as he that loses all that he has by a cast at dice. He has 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, not even in his recreations or in his weightiest worldly dealings, feasting, company, etc., 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 soul's 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 another, 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 her 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, than as we are 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 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-being comes from him. So do we in our wants and necessities lift up our hearts unto him by prayer, for the obtaining of the things which we lack. And when he thus bountifully imparts 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 doubts 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 Samuel 30:6), because it is so sweet and beautiful to think and meditate often upon the infinite good things that flow from him unto us; but most of all desiring to enjoy his presence in heaven, which shall be with fullness of pleasures forevermore.

And further, because all who 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 than before the greatest potentates in the world: and therefore are prepared to walk before him continually in a 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 throughout their life.

Now besides these duties of holiness which we owe directly to the person of God, merely spiritual and inward, there are others whereby we worship him outwardly, which also are parts of this holiness towards God: it follows 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 than he has 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 condemns); neither must it be any other than that which God acknowledges 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 has ordained for the comfort of them.

Such ministers they must be at the least, who 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 does require: which I knit together for brevity's sake, seeing I have only taken in hand to set down shortly what the parts 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 Christian's 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 requires strictly 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. This includes bowing our necks in making our prayers, lifting up our hands or eyes as occasion is offered, and casting down or lifting up the countenance with cheerfulness as the matter heard requires.

Another part of God's worship is when most of these now spoken of are used privately by us. Also, the talking and conferring of the word of God, in mutual instructing, admonishing, exhorting, comforting, or any other 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 meals 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 lies, 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 since the Scripture teaches that he is not a Jew who 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, 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 often as they are offered to him.

So we are to know this, that when we shall set upon any part of his worship, which now has been spoken of, it is highly displeasing to him to go about the same lightly, rashly, falsely, hypocritically, and unprofitably, for that would be 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 has appointed, 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 worshiping of God should be used, as I have shown in general, I should tarry too long in this matter. But in some few of the principal 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, 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 what we hear, yet not to be contented to rest therein without feeling the true work of it in us. After we have heard, we should give all diligence to muse and confer on the things which we have heard, examining them by the Scriptures, with the good men of Thessalonica, and finding agreement between 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 has taught his people to endeavor after, as whereby he

warrants them singular fruit and blessing. And although this is but the use and help of one part of God's worship, yet if we were alike directed in all the rest, how greatly might a Christian be helped 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, withdrawing our minds from all other things while we are at it, and afterward applying 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, apparelled 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 afterward, to be thankful to the giver of such great good things; and for a long time after, to retain the strength we received by them, so that 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 a 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 while we are pouring out 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 blessings received, be made more readily disposed to pray often with thanksgiving. And these are some of the chief duties to God, and in such a 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 has willed us, that we should frame the whole course thereof holily throughout the six days, so we may glorify him therein. And who does 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 worshiping 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, acknowledgment, 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 requires, and so return to the Lord

again; as Joshua exhorted Achan to do; To be short. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever 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 exempts none; to the end, that we may carry ourselves in a stayed and well-ordered course continually, while we show that in the smallest matters, and in our actions, which seem least weighty, we are afraid to offend: as in our common talk, that it be savory and for edifying. And since we use the name of God very often both in our common speech, and particularly in an oath; his mercy, justice, wisdom, and power are to move our hearts, as often 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 whatever be affirmed or denied, may truly and for certainty be affirmed or denied: and whatever 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, has 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 shines in them, rejoicing with reverence, that he has 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 than the world is acquainted with, and so brings another manner of honor to him, and comfort to men, than 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 throughout the whole six days of our life.

That which follows 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 a hindrance from the consecrating of the whole day unto God: And therefore lawful works being forbidden, we may assure ourselves, that much more he condemns 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, too common on that day, although not tolerable on other days.

But because the Lord knows how prone and ready we are to weariness of well-doing, therefore he has not only appointed some part of this day to be passed in public, and other some in private exercises of godliness; but also he has given us great variety of both sorts, 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, however 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 has done for the sons of men; 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 be more easily 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 examinations 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, tends as well to the edifying of others, as ourselves. Besides 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 comfortings of them, as God does 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 which, he who is wise, will provide and store himself for all the other days of the week, wherein it is likely 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 by all the Christian family, as the charge given to the governor thereof shows: 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 desires 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 follows another branch of the second part of this godly or Christian life, requiring of us righteous dealing towards all men: Whereby the way, this is to be carefully regarded, that seeing there is an apparent distinction and difference between 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 delight in hearing the word preached, and prayer, and reading (which are duties directly pertaining 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 testifies 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, who are brethren with us, which is a holy and especial

love of one faithful brother towards another. And these two are those which Saint Peter speaks of when he says, join with brotherly kindness, love: where this virtue is, they have learned to give everyone 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 gives, 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 than 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 particularly towards one another. Wherein this is required of all inferiors, that they so carry themselves in their whole course to those who, 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 special 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 upheld and maintained in such a way that they may outweigh 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 who are their superiors by God's ordinance and appointment. The which when men are persuaded of, they will readily go under any duty that appertains to them. And from hence issues 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 in every way, as 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 among 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: & hold both their goods and lives so, as they be at their commandment. And servants, who 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, throughout 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, 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 necessaries, 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 wanders 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, etc. 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, than to take upon them to censure those who are wiser than 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 waxes 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 lack, ought to be held in honor and esteem for the same, and not arrogantly and proudly to be scorned: for by such, God helps forward the welfare of those who lack the same. And namely, the ancient in years and gray-headed are to be esteemed, and held in reverence by the younger sort: as Elihu

has given example in the book of Job; who being in the company of sage and grave men, himself but young, did keep silence for a long time: and when he spoke, he said, he did so reverence their age, that he was afraid to speak.

And if we can shape ourselves to give these duties to our betters and inferiors, it shall be easier to regard the dignity and worthiness of those who are our equals, which in that one sentence of the Apostle is taught us: that when the case so stands, 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 which, if we add this, that we be careful to maintain our own reverence and credit among men, by a course befitting our holy profession, we shall do well. Now we are to see what God enjoins us towards their life. To name the duties only, and barely to mention them, does 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 than 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 lies 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 strife, wound, bitter taunt, or harsh handling any other way, either he or his, whereby his life might be made unpleasant, while he lives harmless amongst us: nay though he should provoke us; yet God will have us armed against such offenses, by that mildness of spirit, which changes 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 teaches us, to bear much and suffer far, rather than to be angry in our own cause; which however weighty it seems 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; even 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 does he comfort the life, and gladden 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 shows, saying: Charge them which are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, but easy to be lived with.

But yet it is further required of us, that besides not hurting anyone (as has been said), we should do them good. And indeed, our whole course towards others should be such that we might ease as many men's burdens as we can, seeing God in the riches of his mercy has unburdened us of so intolerable a weight, as pressed us by our sin: even as he has 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 lies.

That this may the better be conceived and practiced by 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 on 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 says, 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 stands up against me? For he that made me in the womb, has 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 speaks of, who visited him in his members (though many others who saw their misery did not so) saying: When I was hungry you gave me meat: Here by his own words, we may see, that true compassion will show itself by relieving in time of need, and does not shut itself up with an unsavory answer, as James speaks, 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 others with whom we live, as they shall stand in need of it, by counsel, labor 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 now conclude this duty towards the life of our neighbor with a little more addition. That which I have said thereof may teach how pity is to be shown 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 valued 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 valued: and as profitable to him who lives 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

has adjoined to it, mercy and tender compassion to succor them that are in misery: and kind-heartedness and goodness, as the scripture calls it, to prevent evil and danger from our neighbor, before it takes hold of him. And thus much of the duty which we owe to the body and life of our neighbors. What remains is the regard and compassion which is to be had over their souls particularly. 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 unblamable amongst our brethren, that so we may hope that one time or another, it may please God to call them home, as the Apostle speaks to the believing wives: And who sees not, that good example and innocent life, do more move the ignorant and unsteady persons at the first, than 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 says; 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 peace-making, and reconciling such as are 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 serves, 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 others most looked after) that with godly

counsel, we pitied the necessities of those that are in want, as their case requires, 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 has 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 has, and sets 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 has 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 requires 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 calls it) free from all executing of such unclean desires by any strange pleasures, which he condemns. And therefore, all the parts of our bodies must 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 who 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 assailed, 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 has in this case provided for their behoof 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 others, 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 conscientiously 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 has 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, than they could have enjoyed alone without it (seeing

marriage was ordained by God himself, a helpful estate many ways, Genes. 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 accounts 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 has taught them to sanctify the marriage bed with prayer and thanksgiving, and that nothing be done between 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 the flesh, and serve not God, as Pope Siricius: to their shame be it spoken, that God hath made known his will in this commandment, as clearly as in the rest: and given grace to them which fear him, to obey him in the same either minister or private person, more than 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 arrogance and folly,

than sound reason which requires 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 8th, 9th, and 10th commandments.

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

So, where the case is plain that anything is another man's, we cannot even lay claim to it, or we despise God. But since it is often doubtful whose the right is, and most contentions and uncharitableness arise from hence, that it cannot easily or clearly be seen into whose it is indeed; here, although men without Christ will not easily be advised,

yet the Lord has provided that his servants shall be ordered for the retaining of love and righteous dealing. Partly they shall forgo somewhat of their own right, as Abraham did to Lot (if it shall be thought expedient), rather than 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 afterward breeds contention), the damage ought to fall on him through whom it came. And if it be otherwise so difficult that it cannot be determined between themselves, let other men of wisdom take it in hand, that if possible, a lawsuit may be avoided, and yet if that cannot be, let it in love be prosecuted.

This is to show generally 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 clearer understanding 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, live by alms; others can in some sort partly maintain themselves but not without the help of others, by borrowing from 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 afterward.

They who have no other way to live or to be maintained but by receiving men's benevolence have their proper duty assigned to them by God concerning their neighbors' goods. First, they should know that their poor estate is allotted to them by God, just as the rich man's is, according to the Scripture which says, "The Lord maketh

poor, and he maketh rich." Therefore, they are to live in it with contentment. They may also find encouragement if they know God to be their father through Christ their redeemer, for there is enough encouragement from there to live contentedly and comfortably in any condition in which God shall set them. For want of this, neither poor nor rich are content without hunting after what belongs to another.

Now, as it is the poor man's duty to be content with his portion, so it is intolerable for him to grudge at other men's abundance, for shall his eye be evil seeing God is good? He ought not even to wish the same and thereby injure his neighbor, but to receive thankfully that which befalls him, acknowledging such to be God's instruments and as it were his hands, whereby he ministers to his necessities. Because the people of God, whether sending relief to the poor of other Churches as those of Macedonia and Corinth did to Jerusalem, or providing for their poor as those in the Acts did, did it to encourage them to remain and abide constant in the doctrine of the Gospel. Therefore, the poor who 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, to glad the hearts of those who refresh their bodies, when they may see their innocent conversation and zeal toward God 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 universal blindness and security is amongst them, seeing they are as far from the desire of true knowledge as they are from the possibility of obtaining it, even though a plain and easy manner of teaching them is offered unto them, which, as it is at this day for the most part, seems to have been usual among such long ago, that the poor lived for the most part

without care of religion, as Jeremiah's words appear. When he found, after inquiry, that there were few who 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 broken the yoke and burst the bonds." May God move the hearts of those in whom it lies to redress it, to pity both the poor and the rich, and to have greater care of their good by providing that they may be taught the salvation and happiness of Christians than they, being yet ignorant, have care of themselves, even to be the means to bring light to some of them who have long sat in darkness, especially for obtaining forgiveness of their sins and the change of their lives.

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

The second sort that I am to deal with here are those who cannot live by their labor alone but stand in need of the help of others by borrowing something from them so they may 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. Therefore, they must not abuse their creditor by dishonestly denying it or being unwilling to repay it, thereby seeking to defraud him with delays and thinking poorly of him if he requires it; this is akin to counting it as their own and a

form of theft, thus shutting up people's compassion from lending. For a chief cause of little lending is poor repayment. Furthermore, they should not borrow without need, as many do to maintain themselves in play and idleness, thus depriving those who truly need to borrow. And even if they find favor to borrow for their necessity, they must not borrow more than they are able to repay, as many undo themselves and others by doing so. They must not borrow to lend to another for usury. Lastly, if their intention to repay at the due time is disappointed, their care must be to satisfy their creditor and content him with promising a new day, paying part, and in any way they can (except being forgiven altogether) to show that they were not negligent in this matter.

Now, concerning those who are able to give and lend, first, I will set down their duties in those respects and how they should use their goods so they may continue this duty of lending and giving. 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 so they may be free from the common evil of wronging anyone in their commodities.

Those who give must give freely, not by compulsion, and cheerfully, desiring thereby to relieve and comfort those who receive it for charity and conscience's sake, as the necessity of the poor body requires and their ability will allow. They should give to one as well as to another and continue the same duty, stretching out their hand more largely in greatest necessity without which necessity they may continue their patrimony and inheritance to their posterity.

The lender is bound to help his neighbor, such as I have described the borrower to be, if he is able to forgo it and for the appointed time that he has lent it, not to require it again, and to receive it at the due

time without any interest, much less to compound or agree with him for any. It is lawful for him to take a pledge if he doubts his credit, provided it is not his bed or such a necessary thing he cannot spare. Yet if he sees that repayment would risk his undoing, he must bear with him and show compassion, either for a time or by forgiving it wholly unto him.

These things considered and wisely regarded, what should it grieve those whom God has endowed 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 especially where God has placed them and to their own kindred? For this reason, people ought to know that they should be more moderate in spending wastefully upon others (where they need not, neither does any charity bind them) or upon themselves in diet, apparel, or suchlike, considering that the one who made them able to give might and could have made them stand in need to receive. Therefore, we have the poor always amongst us so that we may do good to them. However, all is too little for themselves, whether through licentious wasting, such as excess and needless sumptuousness of clothing and providing for their bodies, or through miserable pinching and hoarding up for their posterity, aiming to exceed and surpass their equals. Whatever comes 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. In truth, none are more the worse for it than themselves and theirs, as we often see come to pass; they themselves coming to a heavy reckoning for it, their children for the most part spending it wastefully. Unfortunately, I cannot now bring examples, which in scripture and experience are innumerable.

Regarding the two sorts of them who have goods for their destruction: the one has no other thought abiding with him but about increasing, though he knows not why, and perhaps has neither child nor brother. It is verified of them that the covetous never does good until he is dead, like the water in the ice, which never is profitable until it is thawed. The other sort go so far in satisfying the desires of the heart and the lust of the eye and take such pride and jollity in their life, while they have what they desire, that instead of giving and lending, they do not have sufficient at the year's end to satisfy all their expenses. What do I say, to satisfy, when they are a whole year's revenue ahead in charges, besides other debts, so that they, who might with Job have comforted the hearts of many poor men by lending, are forced to grieve the hearts of many, even those less fortunate than themselves, by borrowing; or which is all one, by deferring those 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 reserved to the owners thereof for their hurt."

And thus much of lending, whereby this one thing may appear, that lending is a help appointed of God for the relief and ease of the poor (without taking anything for it and thus oppressing him with usury) who could not otherwise maintain their charge, rather than for the benefit of those who are well able to live. However, if such men, in some extremity, stand in need and have no way to provide for it but by diminishing their inheritance or by impairing their stock and trade, in such a case, for a present necessity, they shall not offend if they require and seek help by borrowing for some short time (so as they are 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 than by agreement between both parties that the like gratifying of his part may be performed if he will require

it, there is no bond in Christianity so straight that it ties the one party to lend it, nor any liberty therein so large that it gives leave to the other to request it. Both of these principles are drawn from the general law that all must be subject to: namely, "Whatever 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 binds 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 often hindered from following their own calling.

But yet lest we should think that in no case, this duty were to be performed, we must know that for such as are known to 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 gets his living, be approved of God and profitable to men, as the Apostle wills. And therefore, let them be no idle persons, parasites, jesters, jugglers, sturdy rogues, players, or other gamesters, dicers, carders, and suchlike. Then, let them deal lawfully in every part of it, that righteousness may be preserved by them. In buying and selling, let the one give his penny for his pennyworth, fully satisfying also the travail of the other and cost that he has been at, and let the seller perform his pennyworth as good as is agreed for and faithfully. Therefore, deceitful ware, unjust weights, unequal measures, delay in time wherein it should be performed, and suchlike 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 between them be expired. Partnership and fellowship in bargaining, when both are at the like cost or the one's labor and travail goeth with the other's money, by their mutual agreement, this kind of contract (I say) gives 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 opening 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 people, and leave no place to that oppression in the world called usury, or any other such seeking of private profit in dealings without regard of the common benefit of both: when both parties are not provided for, to their satisfaction and according to equity, and to the meaning and provision made by God in that regard, which is that one without the other should not be benefited nor enriched; but one should have care and consideration of the other, and the commonwealth of both (as I have said) respected. Which, if it were regarded between 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 people about the question of usury and oppression, that there can be no use of them in the Church of God or the Christian commonwealth; the Law-maker having said of both, as of witchcraft and 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 than 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 are 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 behoof, there is no more doubt than 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 people. The one is a yearly sum of money for years when the seller has no such annuity, but as he hopes to make it of his labor and commodities. The other is a certain revenue, rent, or part of rent, which he enjoys and is willing to forgo. The first sort is full of danger and causes much wrangling, disagreeing, and contention between the buyer and seller. And no marvel, when that is bought and sold which the seller has not: I mean, when there is no such either for him to enjoy at his time, who has bought it, or for the other to perform that has sold it: Much like them who sell Hops or Corn before they see whether they shall have any to perform or not. In this case, the change of the price causes the one party to repent, and so he studies how he may shift for himself, by whatever means. And indeed, no former bargains 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 person 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 seller's, by fraudulent and crafty dealing: as if he has either sold the same annuity before to another;

or if he knows it to be litigious and encumbered, and so he sells sorrow and trouble to his neighbor, instead 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 buyer's behalf, the sin and offense are when he, knowing the other must sell, and within a certain time, holds 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 others will give, but for a little; perhaps half the value, and so copes him up and sucks 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 is used towards the wealthy, is rank oppression, when the buyer lies thus in the wind, as it were, and will not give according to the value: but if it is practiced upon the weak stated, and men behind hand, it is as the plucking off their skin from their body. If it is asked, what commodity a person 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 offers. If he be but weak or in debt who sells it, let him be sure he gives to the uttermost value, and in token that he does so, let him not be unwilling to release him again afterwards, which shall always prove that he seeks 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 people (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, are to be firmly and constantly retained: and where that has 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 sees can have no good end with equity, and those which he does become defender of, to show all honest faithfulness, and diligence in following of them: That they in whom it lies make no delays in the ending of the suits which come before them, but with all expedition possible dispatch the same: that their light may break forth clearly as the noonday. Which grace is commended in Job throughout 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 individuals to enjoy their own, and neither by play, lotteries, laying of wagers, nor by force, violence, or any kind of oppression; so neither by deceit and craft, do we seek or procure the harm of our neighbor to increase our own profit. And thus, I have set down a summary of the chief duties, which our God has 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 trusts to do: wherein though I have not laid out anything in any large manner (which was not my purpose to do further than need requires), yet he who considers how many duties are to be performed shall see it the more needful to have a brief rehearsal of them, being so many; to which, as to a glass, he

may repair when he will, rather than to desire some few of them handled more extensively, with omission of the rest. In performing these duties, whoever sets himself to delight and makes it his pleasure to walk after these rules; and when he can find by due observing himself (that he has taken anything wrongfully) to turn back unlawful gain: as his liberty shall be great with the Lord, and his confidence strong when he sees 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, than 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? Luke 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 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 banishes this secret

repining at the same, and envying them for it, and the poisoned desire of vain glory, out of ourselves; to which belongs 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, than 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 strive to keep them from an evil name (for those who are not shameless) and from further danger, by informing them of their faults; which, if not yet widely known, may be corrected thereby. But as for open and bold defamers of others, they are not to be dealt with privately when their slander is widespread, but to be censured by the magistrate, so that, taking shame for their sin, they may be brought to repentance. 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 erase the remembrance of their sins, both before God and men.

To this duty belongs another, much agreeing with the former: that is, not to betray a secret when it can be safely kept without displeasing God: for both this and the former weigh heavily on the hearts of our neighbors when they hear that we have no regard for them, where it might do them good; neither do we spare by enlarging 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 lack of love to them. For every truth, and the whole truth, is not always to be uttered; although all kinds of lying and slander are always to be abhorred. I say further, if we should speak of men's faults with a desire that they, to whom we utter them, might help to redress them; yet we could 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 most likely and fit to reform them, and not please ourselves therein: In which case the household 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, lest we should nourish the slanderer, Proverbs 25:23, nor all such reports to be rejected or coldly reprov'd, lest we should embolden the offender and the committer of them, 1 Samuel 2:22-23, but so far as they may be proven; that the guilty may be duly censured, as Paul did the Corinthians: but not without proof, lest the slanderer should be encouraged: for which cause David said to Saul in this very case, "Why does the King give an ear to them who say, David seeks to kill you?" 1 Samuel 24:9. It is moreover required of us

that we uphold the good name of our neighbor when we are in a place where he is unchristianly and reproachfully spoken of, so that we may cause slander and envy to cease: and not to deliver him, being innocent, in such a case, when we may, is little different from defaming him ourselves. Which was the sin of those cruel Jews mentioned in the Acts; who when Paul was accused as an evildoer, 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 is 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 suit 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 handwriting, or any other means of credit, to clear the name of him whose good conduct is approved by us, from unjust reproach; yes, and if the case be weighty and urgent, as far as we know his innocence, not to be unwilling to clear him by our oath. There is yet another thing, wherein our love should manifest itself towards our neighbor, as necessarily as in any of the rest: And that is, by sincerity of heart, and kindness to interpret all such of his sayings and actions as may be well taken, in the best light; and not for some minor flaw, and as it were half a fault, to mar the whole; and to be free from suspicion and conjecture about that which cannot be proven 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 utmost, as through

uncharitableness being able to bear with nothing: For who does 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 falls out oftentimes, that we were (and that to our great shame) merely led with rashness, and utterly deceived? (which cannot be more clearly seen, than in Saul against David and Jonathan, both by mere suspicion against both, 1 Samuel 22, and by listening wrongly to Doeg against one of them, verse 11.) To our shame, I say, because what shame almost can be greater, than 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 mere 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 makes 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 says, 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 behooves us to examine our dealings with our neighbor's 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 has been said of this argument, let our chiefest care be, that we stain not our own good name and credit in 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 often wish, desire, and delight in, seeing our God wills it so, that thus the contrary cravings after that which is his, may (as the most unsavory vomit) be cast up, and avoided by 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 those who go for good Christians, that it is almost buried amongst men, save that God of his goodness has some few, who keep it in remembrance, that the rest may know, that such practice he looks for of all his servants. For though it be written in the book of God, never to be erased by the Serpent's subtlety, yet unless some lively pattern of it may be seen in men's lives, the practice of it, as of many other excellent truths beside, grows into unfamiliarity, 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 makes us better able to serve our neighbor in all the former. And ought we not to wean our hearts from longing 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 delighting in those things which please him? And if we love him, we should consider that love thinks none evil of our neighbor, nor intends any harm 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 says, 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 gives them? and therefore desire that which is precious to them, that so

they may be held 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 bonds 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 desires 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 looks to these things so, that he lives 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 thinks 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 grow empty, barren, and forgetful. And for the more extensive and thorough handling of them, or the exact setting down of all particulars, it was not my purpose, and it would have been too extensive, seeing in one Catechism or another, and in various 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 they are 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 has 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 calls 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 lays forth the life of the believer in various 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, & 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 to day 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 teaches us to believe, that he will enable us thereto, and bless us therein. So that, he that lives not godly, lives not by faith: nor he lives not by faith, who does not live godly.

And now to conclude 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 has given this gift of faith (for it is the gift of God) he requires 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 reaches to, and lays hold of the promises of both, even as God has 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 brings: 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 lies. 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 often 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 are 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 makes 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, than they that have all shifts, and cunning sleights and devices to gain by: I say that which is incredible to the worldlings, politikes, 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 has 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 has 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 does show us; but when we have served God's providence by lawful labor & travail, and used the means, we commit the success to him: and the fruit of our pain, we receive with thankfulness (whatever 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 crosses our good and lawful attempts, lest we should be glued too fast to these earthly things: and we remembering, that God loves us dearly, and that of love he chastises 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 means? 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 does 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 lies 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, lest 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 Christian and the believer's life is, and in what duties it consists: and have disclosed, in some sort, the sins which, instead of this godliness, possess men. The whole, I confess, has 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 who 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 the 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) whenever 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 deserves the first place, and of right, ought to prevail with us: that seeing this Christian course does 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 King's son is admirable: but behold, here is more: for in Christianity, we find, that he who 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 endows with other gifts, than all princes have to give?

It was a great part of Solomon's royalty, that he gave silver, as stones; and goodly Cedars, as the wild fig trees: the Lord gives 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 has made and fashioned man so excellent a creature of slime: but it is a greater honor, that he has of a rude, unbridled and unclean devil, made a well-ordered, sober, and meek Christian: yea a sanctified person; as the Scripture calls him: for by his holy spirit through the work of the Gospel, he has 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 Luke 7:47. and of a persecutor, a preacher: yea himself a persecuted man, even Paul the Apostle. And how does 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 has done great things? And such grace does God give, to them (I mean) that fear him, that he causes by their light which shines 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 the eye.

As all was not heard of Solomon afar 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 does God honor them that honor him, that he may be all in all, and by them shown to be most honorable. And to speak of our own time, wherein we live, notwithstanding it affords 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 others 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 than 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 others 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 looks 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 are 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 others 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, wherein we are 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 afresh, 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 slight regarding of his master's so weighty admonition & 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 shows us that he lied. And the like example is that of Judah the Patriarch, who went out in the morning to his sheep shearers, thinking of no such matter as fell out by the way; but meeting with a woman in harlot's apparel, having not strongly armed himself against all sin, agreed and lay with her.

By all which it appears, that when men fear not their frailty, and arm not themselves against the same, they come home less godly, than they went out: and because 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, than this by daily experience; that as God directs 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 meantime, 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 you should fasten upon them such a burdensome yoke of commandments, as this is, to walk armed against evil. For if you 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 you 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 stiffnecked 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 utters 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, & Christian duties, painfully laboring to attain more knowledge by hearing Jesus his sermons from day to day?

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 do not propose 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 who come to Church and hear prayers and sermons, who for all this, are never the better to themselves; and most of them do more harm to others by their offensive life, not fashioning themselves after the doctrine of faith and amendment. Of whose lamentable condition, what other cause can be shown 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 shines amongst them that they will be subject to it: though Christ reigns 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 has 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, comes to nothing; neither commends them any whit to him; neither leaves 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 has 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 has 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 to day, 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 requires 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 condition of many, who yet 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 condition 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 than 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 exercises 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 eyesalve?

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 shown 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 sleighter manner, than they sometime had done: as he punishes 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 grown 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 keeping the best things, in price and estimation: and when the Lord sees this, he takes from them the privileges which they enjoyed before; he dims the light of their minds, that they see not so clearly; and shuts 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 awaken 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 fulfilling 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 awaken 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 complainings, uneasinesses, discomforts, & 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 takes away even the heart and life (as I may say) of prayer, knowledge, and other means of religion, and leaves his children without comfort in the use of them, when they grow wanton against his majesty, and keep not holy compass, as they have experienced, that both they may and have done, and as he in his word has 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:

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 who believes in God, I would cease to say any more 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 hindrances, and heartily go about to practice the same willingly when they have heard it. But I know there are few such. For those who do thus, not only themselves walk after the rule which I have set down, aiming thereat as at a mark, but also desire that many others were as they are.

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, think that this which I have drawn out of God's word and set down for their edifying is more than they need to look after or trouble themselves with. Since this kind of persons swarms everywhere, I often say and profess that I oppose myself throughout this book against 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. Even many of those who have further tasted of the Gospel, of whom it becomes us to hope well, 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 times and fleeting desires to live honestly.

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, 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 has given them to walk in it, neither what great cause they have to lay hold of such encouragements, having many things to hinder them. Therefore, those persons, as 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). Once this is done, they shall see what difference is between the estate they are in and that which they are stirred up and called unto.

And that which has persuaded and moved me to this, is (as I partly said in the first entrance) 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 stand, 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 who are weaker are under deadly dumps, strange questionings, whether they shall go forward or not, and such small comfort they find in their profession that they declare plainly that they are far from the steadiness which I speak of, and this not at the first only, but many years after they have liked well of the Gospel.

Various others account the Christian life mopeish, solitary, and such a state, which they hold great wisdom to avoid. 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 deceives not) but such a state as has caused many for the delight they have found in it to refuse all others, 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 an answer to all, let such understand and know that this Christian life is not to be pieced up with some good actions in which we may rest, neither consists 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 has experience of it would not change it for any other. For why? It yields a hundredfold 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 does plainly declare, that the man who may

rejoice and speak of his estate with comfort indeed is he who does not by fits and at some odd times lift up his heart to God, but who does so love his law that he meditates 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 unprofitably and amiss, that he should by and by without dallying or delay call them back again. And what, think we, does he mean in another place, when not speaking particularly of himself but generally of all who are the Lord's, he says? The blessed man does exercise himself day and night in this, that he may please God (as his word directs him) and have peace thereby with him, and so may testify that God is his treasure because his heart and love are set upon his commandments. He does not mean that we, who will be happy, must be occupied in prayer, hearing or reading only both day and night; neither yet does he mean that at some pangs or when we think good, we should be occupied thus, and well affected, and have our lives well framed. But this he means, that he who is godly and happy indeed endeavors 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 a sort as they might show and approve themselves to be men of God. If we desire to see examples of these things, the Scripture sets 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 is 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 wherever he went, 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. Just as he left his country and kindred at God's commandment when he knew not yet whither he should go or what should become of him, so when he had leisure afterward to return, yet he refused, because he sought a better country, namely, a heavenly one, bearing witness continually that his obedience was sound and faithful, by looking to another inheritance, until a hundred years were fully complete in a holy course.

And of Job, how clearly does the Holy Ghost witness to what I speak? So much so that he not only withdrew himself and departed from the corrupt examples of the people of his time, but also had a particular regard for the actions of his life, both towards God and men. For proof thereof, his strong faith with patience, prayers, and sacrifices testify the former, while his just dealing with all men, mercy to the poor, and rare wisdom in governing his own family and in dealing with all, clearly show the latter. All of which were not occasional but usually and ordinarily performed, and throughout his course of life looked unto and continued.

Yet another thing I must needs add (as I am persuaded) is very admirable: that he used to acquaint himself in the midst of his prosperity with the expectation of a change and did learn in his greatest abundance to want. Being in so high a place, he was not

puffed up because he considered how fleeting and momentary all things were, and that his prosperity was lent to him only for a short time and was not a patrimony or inheritance forever. So when he was afterward tried with the loss of all (which was exceeding much), it might appear that he was but little moved by it because he had loved it but little when he did enjoy it. This gracious man thus using the world, as has 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 diligent attention to his ways and the directing of the thoughts of his heart in a very particular manner, especially in and about worldly goods, in which case men think no bounds should be prescribed to 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 Pharaoh's 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, shining daily more and more like the sun until noontide. He was not weary of his service, as many are, but liked it better the longer experience he had of it, so that there was no good being elsewhere to him, and he 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 heart, we may see more particularly how he spent his time in one place of his Psalms, where he says: "This is the course of my life, after which I frame myself, as the blessed of the Lord also do: with my whole heart I seek thee, O Lord, as thy word teaches 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, than 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 resort to God ordinarily in prayer and thanksgiving, after a solemn manner, besides other occasions often moving him; so that save only in that one matter of Uriah the Hittite, we seldom read of a man more taken up with a heavenly heart than he was.

I make mention of these holy servants of God, more particularly setting down their course of living, their properties, and their whole estate, rather than some of their actions and holy works, for this purpose: 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 even the worst have somewhat commendable in them) 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 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 being teachable and ready to hear whatever the Lord requires 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 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) nor that they should rest in what they have,

but look upon such to follow them, who in the Scriptures are set before them as the foremost Christians and holiest examples. So that by acquainting themselves still with their own wants, weaknesses, and corruptions, which they bear about them, they may daily gather strength against them and prosper as the Lord's plants, in every part of their life to become fruitful.

Thus, they shall know by experience what this means, 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, to mortify it, and to purchase for them a comfortable passage thither also, through the enjoyment 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 it is to be known that as everyone excels another in the graces of the spirit, so their measure is greater in the privileges of a Christian more than others, and with more sound and continual comfort they pass their days and free their lives from reproachful and fearful evils. And the more that any godly person increases in goodness and goes beyond that state wherein they have sometime been, in knowledge and in a high esteeming of it, and the right use of the same, the more their life is filled with matter of sound and pure rejoicing.

Therefore, to conclude this matter: seeing the godly and Christian course of living is not serving God when we think good, but from time to time; nor looking to some of our actions when others are not regarded; nor an estate unpleasant to the spiritual man, whom the Holy Spirit directs, but easy, sweet, and comfortable; seeing also we

have heard by many examples of godly men (otherwise not without their infirmities any more than we) that this life has 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.

Consequently, the life of the common Protestant, which counts it preciseness to be abridged of any liberty that he has been wont to use or yet likes to enjoy (however unlawful or offensive it may 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 who will not be touched nor suffer his actions to be censured or reprov'd, though he is far from this practice, but pleases himself in the things which he does, is (without all question) fraught and filled with infinite evils, and a bondman to his own lusts, whatever opinion he has of himself, and let such a one know that his damnation sleeps 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 well-liked by us (though God judges the heart), many such (I say) keep at a stand 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 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 than I need. 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 Machiavellians, who with their stinking

breath poison many thousand inhabitants who dwell in the land amongst them, yet besides this, the abomination is great without respect to them; through ignorance, little reverence to the word, custom in evil, and slight execution of sundry good laws among us: but this ought to be no offense to any. For who would look for any other than a loathsome life in the greatest number, as it has always been? Christ himself affirming that his flock is but small, Luke 12:32.

But notwithstanding this, in some places, and those many, throughout her Majesty's dominions, where the Gospel has 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 who have known them, and lived amongst them, and whose names have sounded, and that most justly, afar off, where they themselves have never come: Myself have known many, and yet do (may the Lord multiply the number of them, and the grace which he has given them, a thousandfold, and be highly praised for them) with whom to have lived and been conversant, has 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, while 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 has beautified his Church with) as may justly take away this offense from any who should think that we have none who 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 in serving God there is great

reward, and that godliness receives many blessings as the fruits of God's promises, even in this life.

And they do not, as many do, 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 first knew the power of the Gospel. Yes, 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 labor in the service of God, such 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 sometimes gone about these spiritual duties untowardly, while their minds (though renewed) were weakly seasoned with grace; yet afterward 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 worshiping 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 teaches them. And such as these are, God has 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 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 has ever lain in, they have not therefore many to commend their good examples as the others have, but rather are ill-spoken of because they will not follow the same excess of riot that others do (1 Peter 4:4), and especially where they dwell; for the devil envies 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 spoke according to sound reason) and made him swear to him that he would be kind and friendly to his posterity after him (1 Samuel 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 affords none who 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 who are willing to understand, but easy to be found out by 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 which they are accustomed. And such of them as God has 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 has set such among them for far more great and singular purposes than they can discern by carnal eyes. Let them labor to see their own wants, causing them to make much of those who may help to supply them, and from whom they may learn to acquire those graces which they should never have attained to without the help of such.

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 no longer be led by 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 did in the Acts (chapter 2:13, compared with 2:37), who in their profaneness railed on the Apostles and said they were drunken with new wine in the forepart of the day. But being converted by Peter's 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 is the 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 greatly weaken the holy courage of the servants of God if they were not well fortified against it. And this is it: Seeing we publicly teach the same, which I have before set down regarding the state of the godly, and profess without fear that thus the people of God must walk, and we affirm that God is not pleased with this dark and dead life led by men's good intentions 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 than 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 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 what we know; nay, we dare not do otherwise, though it be against ourselves 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 be removed farther from us, while we are nothing more afraid than 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 ourselves 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, whatever become of us. And the truth of God remains, 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 appears by his own confession in the Psalm, where he says: "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, while 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, having addressed this doubt regarding David, it is evident that no wise person need take harm from it. However, because I know how some may misconstrue such examples to justify liberty in sinning, even using this example more than any other against themselves when they should take it for good, I will add this one thing, which I would otherwise have omitted, since I have mentioned it before: That David did what was right in the sight of the Lord and turned away from nothing that he commanded him, all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. Therefore, just as it was unusual for him, and he rarely offended in cases well known to

him, it is no reason for us to be discouraged from a sound course for fear of falling in a similar manner, but to watch in all things so that we may be further from such fear.

Regarding Peter (to speak of him), before Christ's ascension, although he was faithful and commendable in many parts of his life, he did not possess such great strength and growth in grace that we should be content to be as he was, but rather we should strive to be lights and good examples in all good works, lest we should fall away dangerously as he did when he denied his master. I know God can correct even his dearest servants in a fearful manner. But blessed be his name, we know this much of his mind, that he takes no pleasure in their troubles, nor delights in their sufferings, much less does he take advantage of their infirmities.

He rescues them from deep dangers when they have plunged themselves into them. And if we do not provoke him, there is no fear of reproachful evils being sent upon us by him. Therefore, if we count it a pleasure to please him and to be watchful against the occasions of sin, this gives us holy boldness and confidence that we shall be kept from fearful falls rather than being afraid of them by being too godly. Neither was Peter thus armed when he so offended, but as we can easily see, he fell because he was naked and unarmed.

The same applies to all others in this case who dishonor God as he did. Now, if he fell, and we may also fall, while we are not without confidence in God, what is to be thought of our best actions if we were to do as many would have us, namely, to show and profess no more than others do, and thus make common professors examples to be rules for our lives? What would our lives then be but a very dunghill fraught with unsavory filthiness, and not an honoring of God lightly now and then? Neither let men say they cannot live

otherwise than they have done, nor discontentedly say we would have them take no delight in anything; but husband and wife must sit and look heavily upon one another, neither may neighbors be merry together.

For those who say they cannot leave the course in which they have lived (that is, in small knowledge of God and his will, following the world with greater pleasure than the word of God, and finding their other joys in things here below, using their labor even as toil, etc.), they may understand that if they cannot change such courses, their own mouths shall be their accusers, for such cannot be in a good state. For I advocate no other change upon them than they themselves shall be forced to confess is required by God of them, and that for their best.

And being so, I would ask this of them: Who is he, that having lived long in a cottage full of penury and wants, cannot adapt himself to a more affluent estate, if it befalls him, and to enjoy greater abundance of all good things suitable for this life, simply because he has long been accustomed to a meaner and poorer condition? Is anyone so destitute of common reason, or so obstinate, that when his diet may be wholesome and pleasant, his apparel clean and respectable, his habitation comfortable, and well protected against all weather conditions, he will yet refuse all these being offered to him, for a portion in poverty, where his needs cannot be met? And yet, what comparison is there between these things and the high degree of felicity, which in the Christian course I propose, in contrast to the deceitful, vain, and painful pleasure (for so I may justly call it) which they enjoy, who follow their old customs and lusts of ignorance?

Therefore, they must indeed confess that their blindness is to be lamented, as well as the hardness of their heart and deep unbelief,

which keep them at this standstill, that however we may bring them tidings of something better, having long been bewitched by their darkness and sin, as the people were with Simon Magus' sorceries, they cannot change their old ways.

Regarding the second part of their objection, where they disapprove, saying we would have them delight in nothing they have, such as wife, children, goods, neighbors—if I would have them live according to the rules I prescribe: I answer that their entire way of life must indeed be put off, wherein they have lived according to the ways of the world. This ought not to be a strange thing to them, as it is such a common truth in the Scriptures; even all that they hold as their own, both in heart and life, as far as possible, must be abandoned. Therefore, their frivolity, delighting in evil, finding pleasure in created things more than in the Creator, and making these things their chief joy—all these, along with corrupt merrymakings, must be pruned away from them (just as we would trim off the undergrowth that sucks up the sap and juice from the good vine branches), which, if they were fit to see it, have troubled themselves and others more than all their foolish liberties have pleased them, and therefore both they and others should be more glad of such a change. And what value is there in rejoicing with wife and other friends, which must be repented of? But if it be done with understanding, who forbids it? When it is well known that both marriage and other fellowships, which true religion has made among people, are the sweetest and most comforting of all. As for the rest, 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 easily as trimming their nails? If anyone speaks better of it, it is only he whom God has not taught to speak. Therefore, to conclude, as these and similar objections are too trivial to displace a godly life from the practice of true Christians and

believers, so when it shall be pursued as I have taught and set down in this treatise, then they shall lead a life of faith, even the life that pleases God; and consequently, they shall live happily in every estate and lawful calling whatsoever. For he walks safely and surely who walks uprightly. And he who does otherwise, and perverts his ways (as I have shown how, by departing from the truth which he knows), God will find him out, and he shall encounter enough plagues and sorrow.

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