

MONERGISM

**The Humbled Sinner
Resolved What He
Should Do to Be Saved**

OBADIAH SEDGWICK



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The Humbled Sinner Resolved
What He Should Do to Be Saved
by Obadiah Sedgwick

What hee should do to be Saved

OR,
Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only way of Salvation for sensible
Sinners

DISCOVERING
The Quality, Object, Acts, Seat, Subject, inseparable Concomitants
and degrees of Justifying Faith

The Agreement and Difference of a strong and weak Faith;
The Difficulty of Beleeving, the Facility of mistake about it, and the
misery of Unbeleef. The nature of living by
Faith, and the improvement of it to a Full Assurance

Wherein several Cases are Resolved, and Objections Answered

By OBADIAH SEDGWICK, B. D. and late Minister of the Gospel in
Covent Garden

MATTH. 11:28
Come unto mee all yee that labour and are heavy laden, and I will
give you rest

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TO THE READER

Christian Reader,

It is sufficient commendation to the ensuing Treatise, to let thee know, that it was Written and compleated by Mr. Obadiah Sedgwick in the time of his health. It hath now pleased God by Death to take him from Preaching, yet if the Printing what he had formerly Preached may become further useful to the Church of Christ, as it will bee much comfort to mee, so I doubt not but it will bee matter of much rejoycing, and great benefit unto many others. These Sermons handle the Doctrine of Justifying Faith, and if they shall prove Instrumental, either to work or increase Faith in thee, let God have all the glory.

Thy Servant in the

Work of Christ,

ED. CALAMY.

To the READER

Good Reader,

This Treatise commendeth it self to thy acceptance upon a double account, the one is, the known worth of the Authour, the other is, the great usefulness of the subject matter: The Authour was Mr. Obadiah Sedgwick, no Novice in the things of God, but one that for a long time, both beyond the Seas, and at home, in City and in Countrey, did keep up the vigour of a convincing Ministry, which the Lord did abundantly prosper, to the converting of some, and building up of others, and no doubt to the conviction of many more, who shall one day know, that a Prophet of the Lord hath been amongst them: Besides, hee was one of an exemplary godliness, and of long experience in the waies of God; of whose excellent spirit the world hath had a sufficient taste, in those choyse Treatises already published under his name; Certainly, from such an able head, and holy heart, nothing can be expected that is cheap and mean.

It is a losse, a losse that cannot enough be bewailed, that so eminent and usefull an Instrument, is now by Death taken away from his publick Ministerial labours: there is no murmuring against the hand of God, but the wasting of the Old stock of our able Ministers should be more laid to heart; alas! we that are to succeed in the Lords Work (I am sure I can accuse one) with what a weak and unequal pace do we follow their great examples? and being too too early, by the removal of such choyse instruments, put upon publick services, no wonder if we faint under the burden.

It is some recompense for this losse, that this worthy servant of God, did (to honour his own Ministry, which was most consolatory) single out such Treatises as might be of most use to publick benefit and edification.

The other reason, is, the usefulness of the subject matter. Of all Graces Faith is the chiefest, of the most universal and constant confluence on the spiritual life; Wee work by Love, but wee live by Faith. In the chain of Graces, described 2 Pet. 1:5, 6, 7. the first link is

Faith, as giving strength and efficacy to all the rest; what is the grace that yeeldeth the Lord the glory of his Mercy, Veracity, and Power, but Faith? it honoureth God more than an uniform, entire obedience to the whole Moral Law in Innocency could possibly have done, and pleaseth him more than hee was displeas'd with the sin of Adam; All graces keep time and pace with Faith, if Faith bee weak, Love cannot bee strong, nor Obedience carried on in an even tenour, the back of Patience will soon bee broken, and Temperance exercise but a weak and feeble restraint on our lusts and passions, till wee learn to counter-balance present Delights with future Enjoyments. Faith is the Eye of the soul, to see things to come, and the Hand of the soul, to receive Jesus Christ, and all benefits in him. Faith,——But I will not digresse into the common place; Certainly, no Treatise of Faith can bee unwelcome to a gracious heart, especially such a one as this is, where matters are carried on with such evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and, as to the stile, with a sweet elegancy, and yet tempered with gravity and judgement.

I could speak more, but to avoid suspicion of partiality, and private affection to my worthy Predecessour and Father: I shall only adde this, it were pittie that so excellent a Treatise should come forth in an Age pestered with such a throng of needlesse Writers, but that it is likely to bee found out by its own lustre and brightnesse, like a sparkling Diamond, among an heap of Pebbles and common stones. Reader, I am

Thine in all Christian Offices,

THO: MANTON.

Sirs! What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Acts 16:30, 31

CHAP. I

The Dependence of the words

Paul and Silas (on their journey) make a step to Philippi, a chief City in Macedonia, vers. 12. They had a special call for it, vers. 9. Being there, the next Sabbath, they apply themselves to Praying and Preaching, vers. 13. and each of these was crowned with a blessed effect.

By the former, Lydia is converted, vers. 14, 15. By the latter, the Devil is dispossessed out of a Damosel, vers. 16, 18. The Word and Prayer are the great power of God to change the heart, and conquer Satan.

But if we trouble the Devil, the Devil will not cease to trouble us. It hath been the lot of the best Ministers, to do most good, and finde most affliction. Look but in the 19. vers. and there you shall see Paul and Silas caught and drawn before the Rulers.

Good God! That Paul should be questioned because hee did cast out a Devil! But this is not the matter objected, nor the immediate ground of the trouble (Her Master saw that the hope of their gains was gone.) How far will the love of the world thrust a man against Gods servants? even Paul himself is brought to the Bar, when hee cuts off the gains which the Devil brought. Covetous hearts and good Ministers can never agree; They will rather sell the Truth, than lose their Gain.

But being now before the Magistrate, what is their accusation? What! that Paul and Silas did cast out the Devil? No; That they who were the Masters of the Damosel, were impaired and disadvantaged by their preaching? No, though this was the ground, yet something else was the pretence. This would seem somewhat too base, and therefore they urge against them another allegation, which they knew would easily take, vers. 20. These being Jews, exceedingly trouble our City, and vers. 21. Teach customes, which are not lawful for us to receive, nor to observe, being Romans.

As if they said, they are a couple of factious and schismatical fellows, men of a singular spirit, given to innovation, speak strange things of one Christ, and of Beleeving, and of Repenting, and wee know not what.

They need say no more, presently there is an uproar, and without any more ado, right or wrong, they have Justice. The Magistrates rent their cloathes, and command to beat them, vers. 22.

And this is not enough, besides the whip, they must to the Prison, and be kept safe and close, vers. 23. Hatred of goodness doth many times precipitate evil men to the acts of injustice; and he who hates a good man, will many times become a bad Judge.

But in the prison and stocks they are, and the Jaylor is as strict to execute, as they unjust to command, vers. 24. Hee did thrust them into the inner prison, and made their see fast in the stocks.

A strange Providence is that of God; Paul and Silas are sent to prison to convert a Jaylor, to unloose him, who bound them, to heal him, who scourged them; God hath some special ends in the times and places of his servants sufferings. Well, at Midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God, vers. 25. No prison can bolt out our Communion with God. Prayer will get up to Heaven in despite of all opposition, and even a suffering Christian may bee very chearful.

But now see the consequents of this, their prayers shook the Heaven, and the Heaven shook the Earth, so that the foundations of the Prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and every ones bands were loosed, vers. 26. I do not marvel that Prayer can break the bonds of Iron, when I know it is able to break asunder the bonds of death it self.

The Jaylor awakes, sees the prison doors open, and for ought hee knew, an escape of all his prisoners, for whose lives, probably it is, that hee must pay his own; and therefore in a passionate desperateness, draws out his sword to kill himself.

Paul espies him, and cries out with a loud voice (hold, hold) Do thy self no harm, for wee are all here, not a man of us that hath stirred.

Which when hee had searched and found, O! what a strange alteration is in this Jaylor? vers. 29. Hee came in trembling. What! hee who before made them to bleed, doth hee now tremble? hee that before cast them into the stocks, doth hee come trembling to them? What were they? or what could they do? shackled and scourged, and imprisoned persons, that hee trembled before them? But so hee did. Scorners will become Tremblers, when God hath once touched their hearts. Yet this is not all; Hee also falls down before them. Hee is upon his knees to ask them forgiveness, for his cruel usage. And then hee brings them forth.

Object. But what of all this? All this may arise from sparks of pitty and humanity.

Sol. Nay, but there is a greater matter than all this: Sirs, said hee, What shall I do to bee saved? (As if hee had said) I am in a miserable condition, I have lived wickedly, and done wrong to many of the people of God, and in particular to you; Good Lord! what shall become of mee? you are the Ministers of Christ, I beseech you have pitty on mee, and shew unto mee what I may do to save this poor soul of mine.

What doth Paul and Silas answer him? they said, Beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt bee saved. And I beseech you mark it, how immediate their answer is to his question; they do not say, as the High Priests to afflicted Judas, Look thou to that; they do not upbraid him with his hard and cruel usage; They take not that advantage, and say, Nay, now doth thy conscience trouble thee for being so wicked, and scourging us so sharpely? yea, and so let it; dost thou come for direction and comfort to us, whom thou hast so shamefully abused?

No, they forget the injuries, and presently pour in the Oyl. They instantly direct him into the true way of life, Beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt bee saved. But more of this anon.

I have chosen this text on purpose, that I may proceed to the next Article of the Creed (I beleeve in Jesus Christ our Lord) you see it is exprest in the Text.

But before I handle it, give mee leave to Analyse the words, and to touch upon some singular conclusions, and then I will set down upon the Article it self more fully.

CHAP. II

The opening of the words, with the several Doctrines in the Text

The words of the Text do contain two parts.

1 A case of Conscience to bee propounded by a troubled and trembling sinner: The case is not for another, but for himself, what shall I do? And not about his riches, or wealth, or his body, but about his soul: And that not for meer speculation, but for practicals; it is a

case about his salvation, and about the means which hee should take to attain it: Sirs, what shall I do to bee saved?

Secondly, The case fully resolved: (Beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,) As it hee said, Christ is the onely way to Heaven, and faith is the only way to Christ; God hath given Jesus Christ to sinners, and salvation in him; And whosoever beleeves in him, shall not perish, but have eternal life. Now then, beleeve in him, and you shall be saved.

There are many conclusions emergent from these words, I will omit most of them, and onely insist on the latter.

1 Change of heart breeds change of estimation toward the Ministers of the Gospel. The Jaylor a little before had a base and unworthy opinion of Paul and Silas, but now, Lords, Sirs, what shalt I doe?

As the Heart is, so the Judgement is, and Newness of Nature, hath with it Newness of Light. Wee can now see the men, and their authority, and their office, and embassage, and the end of all their reproofs, and instructions; and therefore the very feet of them who bring good tidings, and publish peace and salvation, are beautiful.

It argues the heart to bee base and sordid, which can slight and scorn the Messengers of Christ; hee hath no grace, who can contemn and vilifie a Minister of grace. But two things God ever works, when hee confers grace, (viz.) A love of the word of Grace, and an Honouring of the Messengers of Peace.

2 Sensible sinners are ever inquisitive. Sirs, what shall I do? and so, they in Act. 2:37. When they were pricked in their hearts, they cry out, Men and brethren, what shall wee do?

There are two sorts of sinners.

First, Some are hardned, unsensible, wholly over-grown with sin, and are past feeling, Ephes. 4:18. Their sin is in them, like the waters

in the Ocean; under all which, if a man doth lye, yet hee feels no weight nor burden, because the Elements in their proper places are not sensibly weighty: so where sin is in its center, men are unsensible of the burden of it. They feel it not, nor their misery, and therefore neither complain nor enquire.

Secondly, Others are made sensible, not onely by the ordinary light of a natural conscience, but by the contrary principle of new and infused Grace: It is with them like as with a man recovering out of a deep sickness, his health comes in, and makes him now sensible of his weakness, and complaining, and desiring help. So when God doth by his blessed Spirit work the lively sense of sin in the heart of a person, the baseness of it, the danger and misery of it; Oh hee cannot now remain thus, live thus, hee must have a guide, hee goes to a Messenger, one of a thousand, to instruct and direct him.

For first, Conscience truly awakened, cannot bear its own burden, its own divisions, fears, accusations, present condition; and therefore the person will enquire whether there be no balm in Gilead.

Secondly, Again, sensibleness of sin, is Opus respectivum, it is a work for further work. God doth for this very end make us sensible of our sin and misery, that wee might enquire after the means of grace and safety.

Thirdly, Once more, scarce one sensible sinner of many thousands that is able to be his own Counsellor, or comforter; wee are not able alwaies to apply those sweet directions, those proper and heavenly comforts, as God promises, to our own necessities, which yet wee may distribute with a full and tender heart to others in their exigencies: for there is a great difference betwixt the proposing of comfort, and the applying of comfort. Hee who is to propose it, hath a medicine to deliver; Hee who is to apply it, hath a medicine to take. There be many contrary arguments and risings of an unbeleeving and fearful nature, in the person who is to apply the truth, and goodness of Gods Promise to himself, so that hee is not alwaies able

to see the reach and compass of them to himself; and therefore no marvel if hee seeks out for direction in the midst of his own confusions, and for a help to apply, in the midst of his own fears and distractions.

3 The main and choice thing which the troubled soul looks after, is how to save it self. (Sirs, what shall I do to bee saved?)

There be divers sorts of troubles, and according to their grounds and qualities, doth every person lay out for help and remedy. Some are troubled with meer sickness; and health is the thing which they would have. Some with poverty; and riches are the things that they would have. Some with ignominy; and favour, and good opinion is the thing which they would have.

Some with outward affliction and punishment; and exemption is the thing which they would have. Remove from mee this Plague onely, said Pharaoh.

Some are troubled with meer terrours of conscience; and quiet and ease is the thing which they would have.

Others are troubled in soul for their sins, by which God is dishonoured, and their heart polluted; now how these may be saved, This is the thing which these would have.

Come to a soul, sensibly groaning under the weight of sin, and say, why? Soul, bee of good chear, thou hast goods laid up for many years: O! saith that soul, miserable comforters are they to mee; Lord be merciful to mee a sinner. Come again and say, you have many good and kinde friends: Alass! saith the soul, friends are Physicians of no value to my troubled and perplexed soul; Lord be merciful to mee a sinner. Come to that soul, and discourse to him of the defect of sin, of the richness of divine mercy, of the Grace that God hath promised to give, of that sorrow, of that repentance, of that faith, of that blood of Christ; Oh! now saies that soul, say on, give not over, Mercy is that which I would have, and Grace, and Christ, and

Salvation, this is it which I would have, how I may be brought out of this miserable and damnable condition. Suppose a man were very sick, and one should come and tell him many merry tales, to delude the sense of his sickness, this were nothing to a man sick indeed; for it is not a tale, but wholesome Physick which would help him; hee had rather by much hear the Physician discoursing and counselling, and applying: So it is with the truly troubled soul, yea that is it which hee desires and would have, to bee set in the right way how to save his soul. Shew us the Father, said Philip, and that is sufficient; so here, shew mee the way of salvation, and I desire no more.

And the reason of it is this, because

There is nothing which suits with the troubled soul, but the way of salvation: the helps and remedies of it are not to bee found, unless in these waies.

If a man hath a burden on his back, take it off, and that is the way to ease him; if a man hath a feavour, cure him of that, and this is the way to help him; if a mans bone be out of joynt, set it in his proper location, and this is the way to comfort him. In like manner is it here. The distresses of the soul are spiritual, and onely spiritual waies relieve spiritual troubles; I now see God at difference with mee, how may I be reconciled to him? I see the dishonour against him, how may I pacifie him? I feel the guilt of sin, who shall take that from mee? I would be a changed and new person, who will work this in mee? what course must I take to get God to look graciously on mee, to get these sins pardoned, this heart to be sanctified?

I cannot pass over this point without a word of Application.

It salvation be the main inquiry of a truly troubled soul, then verily many people have not yet been truly troubled for their sin; why? Because they strive not how to save their souls.

The Psalmist speaks of some, that God was not in their thoughts; and wee may say of some, that Salvation is not in their minds. Hee who

hath abundance, hath this question, Who will shew us any good? and hee who is in want, hath this question, What shall I do? But, what shall I do to bee saved? few think of this; it is a marvelous thing that so noble a creature as man, who carries in him the singular stamp of Heaven (a spiritual and immortal soul) should so infinitely forget both himself and his errand into this world. I am a miserable sinner (said Saint Hierom) and born onely to repent. Wee are born transgressors from the womb, and with Hell at our heels; God is pleased to draw out the threed of our life, and to vouchsafe to give us this hint, that wee are sinners, and must dye, and if wee change not our condition, wee perish forever. And besides that, hee hath addressed the waies of salvation to our hands, so plainly, that hee who runs may read. Yea, and there is something implanted in men, which secretly inclines them to be affected with a general desire of salvation; nevertheless, to observe men how variously they flie off, how little they minde that which most of all concerns them; how infinitely one drudgeth for riches, how illimitedly another pursues pleasures, so that when wee come to die, wee have hardly thought wherefore wee were born. There is a salvation, and a way tending thereunto, but wee forget that all our daies, wee have other employments: but let us soberly recall our selves.

1 Is there any thing better than Salvation?

2 Is there a nearer thing than the soul?

3 Is there not a necessity to bee working in the way, if ever wee would attain unto the end?

O then let this take us up, let Heaven take us up, let our souls take us up, but let not our sins, let not the world take us up. Ubi pompa? (saith Saint Augustine) ubi exquisita convivia? ubi gentiorum ambitio? ubi argenit & auri pondus immensum? Transient omina ab oculis ejus, putatur requiescere corpus ejus, & habitat in inferno anima ejus, multiplicavit agros, plantavit vineas, implevit horrea, yet saith hee Stulte hac nocte. Hee enlargeth his Fields, planteth his

Vines, fills his Barns, loseth his soul. The like saith Saint Bernard. Dic mihi ubi sunt amatores seculi, qui jamdiu fueriut? Dic, quid eis profuit inanis gloria? Brevis lætitia? mundi potentia? Quid carnis voluptas? quid falsæ divitiæ? ubi risus? ubi jocus? ubi jactantia? Hic, caro eorum vermibus; illic, anima ignibus deputatur infernalibus.

I say no more, but labour to save that, which if it be lost, the world cannot procure it; and beleeve it, that the soul can never bee saved by that which is not worth a soul.

4 Another conclusion from the words of the Text, may bee this, That persons rightly sensible, are at thoroughly resolved for the means and waies, as for the end and scope.

The Jaylor doth not say, I desire salvation barely, but what must I do to bee saved? as if hee said, I desire salvation, and I do conjecture that it is an end, and therefore means there are leading to it: Now, whatsoever they are, point them out unto mee, that I may apply my self for the prosecution of the end.

There are two things which deceive a mans heart.

1 One is presumption, which is a skipping over the lesson, and taking forth before we have learned our part; my meaning is this, that it is an opinion of our happiness, without any use of means: As if a man went to Heaven, as the Ship moves in the Tyde, whether the Master wakes or sleeps.

Another is hypocrisie, which is an inequality of the heart to all the waies of Salvation: No hypocrite will apply himself to every thing which may indeed save him. But where the heart is rightly understanding, and truly sensible, there is not onely a consideration of means, but an illimited resolution for all the waies of salvation: whatsoever course God doth by his Word reveal and prescribe, for that it is resolved and purposed, though they may be contrary to my proud reasoning and capacity, though they may be contrary to the

bent of my affections, though they may require much time and employment, &c.

What the Princes speak with a dissembling heart, that the sinner rightly sensible of his condition, affirms with a plain spirit, of true intention. The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if wee do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us. Whether it bee good, or whether it bee evil, wee will obey the voice of the Lord our God to whom wee send thee, that it may bee well with us when wee obey the voice of the Lord our God.

Hee who will bee saved, must come to this, to deny his own will, to crucifie his own affections, to captivate his own imaginations, to resign up his own desires and pleasures, to afflict his heart for his sins, to give up himself to the rule and command of Gods Word, to draw off his heart from the world, to settle all his confidence upon Jesus Christ, to watch over his own spirit, to love the Lord God with all his soul, and with all his might: These and other things are required as the way to life, and unto them all, doth a sinner rightly sensible, yeeld up himself with all readiness and gladness.

For as much as, though there may bee some difficulty in these, yet there is salvation by them; yea, and there is a singular help for them, as well as a special reward, but the present and former condition and way of sin is ingraven with much pains, and sore horreur, and death, and hell; But I pass on.

5 Another conclusion from the words is this, When God doth thorowly work upon mens consciences, personal injuriousnesses must be forgotten by them who are to deal with them.

You see here that Paul and Silas speaks not a word of this cruel usage towards them, but instantly address themselves to the direction of his safety and comfort, Beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

Wee read of the Father of the Prodigal, that when his son came humbling and bewailing his fore-past miscarriages of Prodigality and

Luxury, He saw him afar off and ran to meet him, and kissed him, and put the raiment on him, and a gold Ring. Hee did not rate and upbraid him; Nay, I will not look on thee, I will not accept of thee, go now to thy Harlots, amongst whom thou hast riotously wasted all that goodly portion which I put into thy hands: O no, hee accuseth not him, whom hee hears to accuse himself, and reviles not him, whom hee seeth to condemn himself. It is enough that his Son who was lost, is now returned; and that hee who was dead, is now alive.

Wee must imitate our heavenly Father in this, who in the Covenant of Grace, will forgive our iniquities, and remember our sins no more. So in another place, If the wicked will turn from all his sins that hee hath committed, and keep all my statutes, &c. All his transgressions which hee hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him. Why? Brethren, If God forgives the man all the wrongs done against him, should not wee forgive the smaller trespasses against us? and what have wee to do to upbraid, when God is pleased to forgive and convert? and what should wee stand upon our respects, when God hath past by all the indignities cast upon his honour and glory?

There are two sores of sinners.

1 Stout and resolute, who know how to slight mercy, neglect command, and to fear at the threatnings; A severe denunciation of judgement and wrath, a conviction and aggravation of their sins, are the proper discoveries for them: For where hath God spoken a word of peace, or comfort, or ease to such?

2 Bleeding and afflicted, who tremble at threatnings, gasp for mercy, faint for deliverance and change. Here now Ministers must have eyes of pittie, and tongues and hands of Oil; they must not pour in scorpions, nor add terrors to the afflicted, but preach liberty to the Captives. They must binde up the broken-hearted, and give them beauty for ashes, the Oil of joy for mournings, the garment of praise, for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, Isa. 61:1, 2, 3. In these cases

wee are not to look on our selves, but on our office, not on our own indignities, but on the patients necessities; that way which God looks, and speaks, that must we speak also. Now God looks on the Contrite, to revive them, and speaks comfort to the troubled souls; and therefore wee must bee silent to upbraid, and ready to direct and comfort poor afflicted souls.

6 Troubled souls must be directed to Christ: For this is it which Paul and Silas adviseth the afflicted Jaylor, Beleeve on the Lord Jesus Christ, &c. They do not direct him to any man or Angel, to any pilgrimage or Saints, they set him not upon any self-standing project, but, Beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But why to Christ?

1 Because none is appointed to relieve a troubled soul but Christ. Him hath God the Father sealed, and hee was anointed to preach glad tidings.

2 None is able to pacifie and quiet a troubled soul, but Christ; whatsoever is sinful or imperfect, cannot be a stay to an afflicted conscience; But Christ, hath perfect righteousness, hee hath wrought full redemption, hee is able to save to the utmost.

3 That which cannot satisfie Gods Justice, can never pacifie an afflicted heart; but if God might bee fully satisfied, if hee might bee reconciled, then the conscience would be quiet; now Christ hath done this, hee hath made peace, and become a curse, and is a propitiation, &c.

4 Hee will relieve the afflicted heart. Hee is called a merciful High Priest, and one who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and hee will not break the bruised reed, and hee calls the heavy laden to come to him to bee eased.

5 There be three things which would marvelously ease and refresh a troubled soul. One, if hee could get off the guilt of former sins.

Another, if hee could get such a righteousness, as with which hee might boldly stand before God. A third is, if hee could get his heart and waies to be changed. Now Christ can yeeld out all this; his blood gets off the guilt of our sins, hee is made sin for us, that wee may be made the righteousness of God in him, and hee can change our natures by his blessed Spirit: Therefore the Apostle faith, that hee is made redemption, righteousness, and sanctification unto us.

But I pass over all these conclusions, and come to that upon which I must somewhat insist.

CHAP. III

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the onely way to Salvation

To beleve in the Lord Jesus Christ, is the onely way to Salvation. The Text is clear for it.

Parallel places are these, Mark 16:15. Go yee into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, 16. Hee that beleeveth and is baptized shall bee saved. Joh. 3:16. God so loved the world, that hee gave his onely begotten Son, that whosoever beleeveth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. Act. 4:12. Neither is there Salvation in any other; for there is no other came under Heaven given amongst men whereby wee must bee saved.

For the discovery of this assertion, wee must open these particulars.

First, The meaning of each of these titles, (viz.) Jesus, and Christ, and Lord.

Secondly, What the beleiving in the Lord Jesus Christ doth import.

Thirdly, How it may appear to be the only way of Salvation.

Fourthly, The useful application of all this to our selves.

1 What is the sense and sum of those three titles, Jesus Christ, Lord? I shall resolve them distinctly.

SECT. I

Jesus signifies a Saviour: as it was a name imposed from the pleasure of Heaven, by an Angel, Mat. 1:21. Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for hee shall save his people from their sins. The first name that you read of imposed on Christ in the New-Testament, is this name of Jesus; for the best name that sinners could possibly desire to hear, was this, that God hath provided a Saviour for them. The Prophet Isaiah, 9:6. faith, that his name shall be called wonderful, and indeed Jesus is a wonderful name: It is a name which breeds just wonder and admiration to all the world, to men and Angels; it may make our hearts to wonder at the hyperbole of Gods love (as one of the Fathers speaks) that hee should (notwithstanding our vile deserts) bestow a Saviour upon us, who else had been lost for ever.

The Apostle saith, Phil. 2:9, 10. That it is a name above all names, no name like it, either for the authority which was conferred on him, who bare that name; or for the comfort which that name bears in it, for a sinner.

Therefore said the Angel to the Shepherds, Fear not, for be-hold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, Luk. 2:11. yea, that is good news indeed. A Saviour for a sinner: no such news as that.

Now here observe divers things. The Son of God is a singular Saviour. No Saviour in all the world like him. Joshua is called a Saviour, and the Judges were called so, yet the Son of God is a Saviour infinitely beyond them. For,

1 They could save bodies onely, they could not save souls, not one of them, not all of them; to ransome, to rescue, to redeem a soul, requires more than an arm of flesh: Flesh may save or protect flesh, but hee must bee more than flesh who can save a soul: Now Jesus Christ is a Saviour of souls, 1 Pet. 1:9; Rev. 20:4. the price of our souls is in his blood, with it hee bought them, and redeemed them.

2 They could save from some outward misery, the tyranny and oppression of the enemy, they have oft-times put back, but from inward servitude and thralldome they could never save; they could not deliver the persons from the tyranny of their sins, whom they have been able to deliver from the tyranny of sinful men. But the Son of God can save from inward and spiritual miseries, hee can save from sin, Mat. 11:21. Hee shall save his people from their sins. Sin hath guilt in it; he saves us from that, by shedding his blood, and procuring remission, Ephes. 1:7. And sin hath pollution in it; He saves us from that, by cleansing the heart, 1 John 1:9. And sin hath dominion with it; but Christ hath assured, that hee will make us free, Joh. 8. And that no sin shall have dominion over us, Rom. 6. Hee can save from Satan, Heb. 2:14. Hee did through death destroy him who had the power of death (i. e.) the Devil, and vers. 15. did deliver them, who through the fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage.

Hee can save from the wrath of God, so hee did, by becoming a curse for us, by suffering the sensible and marvelous impressions of his displeasure for our sins. Jesus (saith the Apostle) 1 Thes. 1:10. delivered us from the wrath to come.

3 They were such Saviours, as did need a Saviour: Christ was the Saviour of them, who were the Saviours of others: Many they did save, but themselves they could not save.

4 Whiles they lived, they could save, but dying, they could not save any longer: but Christ Jesus saved us by his death, the losing of his

own life caused ours; wee are saved by his death, the son of man came to give his life a ransome for many.

Secondly, Hee is a general Saviour, Joh. 4:24. The Saviour of the world: The Saviour of all men, 1 Tim. 4:10. Therefore Jude, vers. 4. calls the salvation by Christ, the Common Salvation. Mistake mee not, when I say that Christ is a general Saviour, as if every man in the world should be saved by Christ: Hee is not a general Saviour in respect of individual persons; but

First, In respect of successions of persons. That is, there never was any age succeeding a former age, but in every age Christ was a Saviour, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever, Heb. 13:8. Hee is the Saviour in the daies of old, and in our daies, and in the times after us.

2 In respect of Nations. Hee is not the Saviour of the Jews onely, but of the Gentiles also: Hee justifies Circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith, Rom. 3:30. The Jew cannot boast, nor the Gentile complain, but there is Salvation for them both in Jesus Christ.

3 In respect of conditions. Hee is not the Saviour of the great and mighty onely, nor of the poor and desperate onely, but the one and the other shall bee saved by Christ: The Salvation of the rich is not in his wealth, but in his Christ: Neither shall the poor person bee excluded, because of his poverty, but all sorts of persons, high and low, rich and poor, may finde Christ to bee a Saviour.

4 In respect of relations. Hee is not the Saviour of the Master onely, but even of his lowest servant; not of the husband onely, but of the wife; not of the father onely, but of the childe; not of the Prince onely, but of the subject also. The Apostle hath said enough, Gal. 3:28. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for yee are all one in Christ Jesus.

Thirdly, Hee is a mighty Saviour; hee is able to save to the utmost, Heb. 7:25. And this appears, if you consider,

1 The greatness of his satisfaction. That hee was able alone to stand before the justice of his Father, and to answer and fulfil it, even to appeasment and contentation, yea, so entirely did hee answer it, that God is now pacified and become propitious.

2 The greatness of his passions. That hee endured the unspeakable wrath of God; O what a thing was this! that the Lord Jesus could at once bee able to bear all our sins upon him, and the mighty wrath of God for them, and expiate all of them.

Hee did stand at the Bar, not to suffer and satisfie for one sin onely, nor for all the sins of one man onely, nor for some sins of most men onely, nor for all the sins of all men in former ages, but for all the sins of all that shall bee saved, from the first man that lived, to the last man that shall dye. Yet though hee had all their sins to answer for, though hee had a severe Justice to deal withall, though he had a perfect Law to fulfill, though four mighty enemies to conquer, Sin, World, Death, and Hell, yet hee went thorow all, satisfied, suffered, conquered.

4 He is a perfect Saviour, the perfection of his saving consists in three things.

First, in the aloneness of it; whatsoever was required meritoriously to save men, is in him alone, there is no other name beside his, nor with his, but hee alone is a Saviour, there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, said the Apostle, 1 Tim. 2:5. There is no concurrence of any Angel, nor of the Prayers of any Saints departed, and glorified, nor yet in the inherent sanctity in any man living, nor yet of any works before, or after grace, which comes in with Christ as a meritorious cause of our salvation: But Jesus Christ alone is sufficient, and effectual to save the sinner: as the government is upon his shoulder, so is our Salvation. Thou canst not

come to an Angel, nor to a Saint, and say, such and such sinnes are the burden now upon my soul, do you by your righteousness ease mee, such and such debts are upon my soul, do you satisfie for mee. Thou canst not come to God, and say, truly Lord, I have sinned against thee, but here are so many floods of tears which I have shed, now for their sakes wash and pardon mee; Here are so many prayers offered up unto thee, for their sakes hear and hearken, and forgive; here are so many charitable works by which I have cloathed the naked, fed the hungry, relieved the poor, for their sakes look upon me, and accept of me.

It is very true, that these things are required of Christians, and I shall hereafter shew unto you the necessity, use, and efficacy of them; but if we speak of the meritorious cause of Salvation, None but Christ, Christ alone.

2 In the fulness of it: from whatsoever we need to be saved, from that he can save us, he is not a surety, who undertakes such a number of our debts onely, but he is an atonement for al sins: sins of nature, & sins of life, sins of ignorance, and sins of knowledge, sins before conversion, and sinnes after conversion, yea hee will deliver us (at length) from all the concomitancy and presence of sin, and intirely from all temptations, and all sorrows, and all diseases, and all death: All these (in his time) will he put under our feet.

3 In the efficacy of it: Being God and man, he suffered, and died, and thereby wrought the works of our Salvation at once; hee doth not die every day to make our peace, but having once offered himself, that was so compleat and acceptable, that it serves for ever. The repetition of things (in some causes) imports imperfection, for that which is still in doing, is not perfectly done, as the Philosopher speaks of things in motion, that whiles they are in motion they are imperfect, but when they attain that end and form for which they move, then they rest; now Christ having once offered himself for to save us, hee rose again, and sate down at the right hand of his Father: hee repeats his sufferings no more, Heb. 10:14. By once

offering hee hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, Heb. 9:28. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him, shall hee appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Thus, for the importance of the title Jesus, the next title is,

SECT. II

Christ. Messiah in the Old Testament, and Christ in the New, of the same signification, Joh. 1:41. Wee have found the Messiah, which is by interpretation the Christ, and this is a sweet word unto us, that Jesus was Christ, that he, who was our Saviour, was anointed. The Lord hath anointed mee to preach good tidings, Isaiah 61:1. And hee was anointed with Oyl of gladness, Psal. 45:7. Will you give me leave to let you see much excellencies in this short word? Wee do speak much of Jesus, and yet wee are ignorant of the form of his saving; and wee hear much of Christ, but perhaps we understand not what force, what comfort, what happiness is couched therein; therefore I will unfold unto you, 1 What this anointing of our Saviour doth import, 2 Unto what he was anointed.

For the first, the anointing of him in whom wee are to believe, doth signifie,

1 His singular and assured ordination to be our Mediator, and to perform the work of our redemption. When that the Prophet had powred the Oyl on the head of Jehu, they presently blew the trumpet, and said, Jehu is King: so when Zadoc the Priest took a horn of Oyl out of the Tabernacle, and anointed Solomon, they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, God save King Solomon, 1 Kin. 1:39. (as if hee said) this is the very person whom God hath appointed to rule over us. In like manner, because the Son of God is made a Christ, because hee is anointed, wee may infallibly conclude, that that person, who was God and man, was appointed, and singularly designed to bee our Saviour and Redeemer; so that wee may with John, point at him,

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. And therefore it is said, that hee was called, that he was sealed, that hee was sent; it was the Act of the whole Trinity, to set the Son apart, to become our Saviour: So now for Christ to be our Redeemer, is no fiction, but a real thing; nor was it undertaken presumptuously, without a calling, but by ordination, and the institution of God.

2 An abundant qualification (that is) that person, the Son of God, being anointed or designed to be our Redeemer, was enabled with all the richness of Grace, and fitness of gifts, every way required to perform the work of our redemption; I have laid help (said the Prophet, Psal. 89:19.) on one that it Mighty; so is it here, our Salvation is to be wrought by one who is enabled to compass and perform it.

Therefore we read of the pouring forth of the Spirit on him, and that without measure, in a most eminent fulness, even to an overflowing.* There was no want of holiness which the Law could require, either for nature or actions, and no word of power to suffer or conquer. Yea, hee was so adorned and beautified with abilities to save, that hee did not only at once go thorow the hard task of our Redemption, but hee still distills vertue down by his Spirit, to save us more and more from our corruption, &c.

3 A sweet and pleasant acceptation both to God and man. Look as the anointing Oyl which in the Law was reserved, and bestowed by Gods appointment, was compounded of the most fragrant and exquisite spices, to intimate the sweet composition of Gifts and Graces, so when it was poured forth, it did cast abroad a most delightful savour. In like manner doth the anointing of Christ imply, a most marvelous and gracious acceptation.

1 With God: and so his Sacrifice was a sweet smelling odour, it was the Golden Altar with Incense, Rev. 8:3. which went up to heaven, with a sweet and delightful well-pleasingness.

2 With men: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1. How much is the Church (in the Canticles) affected with the savour of this precious ointment!

O how much more precious than gold, more delightful than all the rivers of carnal pleasures, is that Oyl of gladness wherewith the Son of God was anointed! anointed to become the Saviour of my sinful soul!

Solomon speaks of Oyl which did give a cheerful countenance: sure I am, if there be any thing which can revive the heart of a drooping sinner, which can chear or quicken his spirits, which can put life into him, it is this, that God hath appointed his Son to dye for him, and to save him.

SECT. III

Now for the second question, (viz.) unto what was Christ anointed? For a satisfaction to this demand, wee must know, that those who were anointed by Gods command, were sequestred to singular and special offices thereby, and there were three sorts of persons, who were to execute three sorts of offices, who were anointed.

First, the Priest, as wee read of Aaron and the rest of that order.

Secondly, the Prophet, as Elishah by Elijah, 1 Kings 19:16.

Thirdly, the King, as David by Samuel, and Solomon by Zadock.

Now Christ differs from all others who were anointed; we read that some were anointed to be Kings, but not to be Priests nor Prophets; others were anointed to be Priests, but neither to be Prophets, nor Kings; others were anointed to be Prophets, but neither to be Kings, nor Priests.

Again, we read of some who were to Kings, and Priests, as Melchisedeck, others to be Prophets, and Kings, as David, some to be Priests, and Prophets, but not any one was anointed a King and a Priest and a Prophet conjunctively. Now here is the excellency and the eminence of Christs anointing, Hee was anointed to all those three offices, not only to be a Priest, but also a Prophet, not only to be a Prophet, but also to be a King.

Had he been a Priest only, he might have offered sacrifice, for our sinful guilt. But who should have then been the Prophet, to have opened the eyes of the blind, and to give the ignorant knowledge?

Had he been a Priest, to suffer, and a Prophet to instruct only, who should then have been a King, to have abolished the confusions of the Heart, and Life, and to have subdued our sins, and so to lead captivity captive?

Nay, that he might be a compleat Saviour and Mediator, He was anointed to be Priest, Prophet, and King, I will open something in every one of these.

He was anointed to be a Priest. Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck, Psal. 110:4. so Heb. 3:1. Jesus Christ is called the Apostle, and High Priest of our profession. v. 2. He was faithful to him that appointed him, see Heb. 4:10; 7:26. There are these things implied in his anointing to be our Priest.

1 That he was designed perfectly to fulfil the Law of God for us. He was a satisfactory Priest, there was the Ceremonial Law, which he fulfilled by abrogation, and there was the Moral Law, which he fulfilled by obedience. Whatsoever the law of God could require, either for the holiness of nature, or of life, that was to be found in Christ: And such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, &c. Heb. 7:26. Hence is he often called the holy and just one, Act. 3:14. and chap. 4:27, 30. and is said to be without sin. He had no sin at all, of which he was personally

guilty, but he was every way a righteous person, and fulfilled all righteousness.

I say, fulfilled it, not for himself only, but for us; so that if you would now look for a righteousness which can every way satisfy, and which is every way punctually, exact, and unblamable, you must look out of your selves, unto the righteousness of Christ, as Paul did, Phil. 3. and therefore he saith, that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness unto every one that believeth, Rom. 10:4.

To make expiation for sinnes: He was an expiatory Priest. There was in the Law, sacrifices offered by the Priest, of which some were Gratulatory, wherein God was praised; and others were Expiatory, wherein God was appeased; as in the oblations of the Lamb, &c. thus it stands with us. As we are creatures, we are bound to obey God, as rational and righteous creatures, we were bound to obey the Moral Law of God, and now as sinful creatures, we are bound to answer the transgressions of that Law, by exposing our persons to the endurance of the great curse of that Law, and the wrath of God: The Law is broken by us, Gods Justice is wronged, his indignation moved, & our own guilt, like so many cords, holds us fast, and delivers us bound hand and foot to the vengeance and punishment of Gods pure and righteous justice.

Now suppose you saw a number of Malefactors going to execution, the Kings Son meets them, they are heavy, weeping, and sobbing, because death is approaching; Why, saith the Kings Son, weep not, you have provoked my father, and have deserved death, but fear you not, I will take a course to preserve your lives: How so? Thus, I will lay down my own life for you, I will die for you, to deliver you. It is even thus betwixt Christ and us, we all have sinned, and by reason of sin are bound over to death and hell, how now shall we escape? Thus, God did give his own Son, and he did take our sins on him, and did dye and shed his blood to expiate our guilt, and procure our pardon. Hence is he called a sacrifice for sin, and he is said to be made sin for us. And to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, and that our

iniquities was laid on him, and that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and to be delivered to death for our sins, and that Christ our Passeeover was sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. 5:7. And observe the phrase, Christ our Passeeover, &c. You know that the Passeeover had a Lamb, and the Lamb lost his life and blood, and that blood was sprinkled upon the doors of the Children of Israel, and the destroying Angel did pass by the doors where it was sprinkled, and their lives were preserved: so it is here, we should have been destroyed, but Jesus Christ our Passeeover was sacrificed for us (i.e.) hee did pour out his own blood, which did answer for our guilt, and so preserved our souls.

Now concerning his Priestly expiation of our sinnes, observe,

First, the Priest who did offer this expiatory sacrifice.

Secondly, the sacrifice it self.

Thirdly, the Altar upon which it was offered.

Fourthly, The dignity and efficacy thereof.

1 The Priest was Jesus Christ, as God and man, as our Mediator, for that did belong to the Priest, who was to offer sacrifice, to be a middle person: Aaron was to bear upon him the sins of the people, and to offer for them; so Jesus Christ, as God & man, was he who did offer up that sacrifice, which did expiate our sins, Heb. 5:5. He that said unto him, thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee, vers. 6. He saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck.

2 The sacrifice it self, was Christ, as consisting of soul and body: by reason of our sins we had forfeited both our souls and bodies to the curse of the Law, and to the wrath of God; The arrest and attachment was out against both, but now Jesus Christ became our Priest, and offered his soul and body to quit and release ours. Therefore it is said, that he made his soul an offering for sins, Isai.

5:3, 10. And that his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even to death, Mat. 26:38. In it he felt the bitter anguish, and wrath, which made him to sweat, even drops of blood; And as for his body, that was prepared for him to suffer for us; hence it is said, that he bore our sins on his own body on the tree, 1 Pet. 2:24. It is very true, that the God-head formally, was not the sacrifice, that could neither suffer, nor be afflicted, onely it did aid and assist the humane nature, which was offered up as a sacrifice.

3 The Altar on which this sacrifice was offered, which did expiate our sins, was Christ as God; as the suffering did properly belong to the humane nature, so the efficacy of that suffering did appertain to the divine nature; had he been God only, he could not have suffered, had he been man only, hee could not have merited: The Altar sanctifieth the gift, not the gift the Altar: for here that which did make up the high efficacy of the sacrifice, was the divine nature of Christ. That Jesus Christ who was God and man, did offer up himself as a sacrifice for sins, was more than if all the holy Angels and holy men in the world had suffered; there is now, by reason of the divine nature, an infinite dignity to answer for all our sins, which else had stood uncanceled.

4 The efficacy of this sacrifice, which is this, that he took away our sins, blotted out the hand-writing, nailed them to his cross, buried them in his grave.

Heb. 9:28. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, 10:11. Every High Priest standeth daily, ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice, which can never take away sins. 12. But this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sate down on the right hand of God.

He did by his sacrifice take away all the guilt of sin, and all the satisfactory punishment, for all this was charged upon him, as our Mediator, our Priest, and our surety, yea, and hee made a perfect reconciliation betwixt his father and us, and therefore as our Priest,

he is our propitiation, 1 Joh. 2:1. and our reconciliator and peace, Eph. 2:14. and our atonement, Rom. 5:11.

So that to give the sum of all this, Jesus Christ was anointed, that is, designed by God the Father to be our Priest, (i. e.) to offer up himself, as a perfect satisfaction to divine Justice, for the remission of all our sins, and punishments, and this he did perfectly perform for us, & this was accepted of God for us.

I say, for us; he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; and who is made righteousness, redemption, and sanctification, and wisdom to us, and that of God; whatsoever he did, or suffered from his Father, it was as our surety, in our stead, and so it is reputed.

A third part of his Priestly office, is this, that hee doth make intercession, Isa. 53:12. He bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors, so Rom. 8:34. It is Christ that died, or rather that is risen again, and is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. And therefore he is called our Advocate, 1 Joh. 2:1. and is said to appear for us, Heb. 9:24 He is as it were, the Deputy, or rather our Attorney, to negotiate for us with the Father.

There is a two-old intercession one by way of duty, another by way of merit, one of charity, another of dignity. When I pray for any man in distress, I am said to be an intercessor, to deal for him with God, as a matter of my duty, and out of a charitable respect; But Christ he only intercedes meritoriously, and by way of dignity. His intercession as I conceive, intimates three things.

1 The exhibition of his person before the Father, as our Surety, our Redeemer, our Mediator, I am he, and I am here to answer.

2 The exhibition of his glorious merits: for he doth not nakedly appear, who appears as an intercessor, but he must actively appear, and so doth Christ He went up to heaven with the price of his blood,

with the ransom which he purchased with the righteousness and satisfaction made with the merits of his oblation and sacrifice, and there he presents them continually before his Father, as if Christ should still say, Father, I am hee that died for to get pardon, to get favour, to get grace, and to get such or such good things, this is the blood that I shed, the price that I paid, to satisfie thy justice, to fulfil thy Law, to remit these sins, to confer these graces, &c.

3 The ingratiating us with the Father: which he doth by the continual application of his own merits; when sin gets up to accuse our persons, and our prayers then Christ shews himself our intercessor, by putting aside the force of the bill of complaint, and answers for our persons, and for our services.

True O Father, this man hath sinned thus against thee, but I am his surety, to satisfie for these his sins, and I did shed my blood for them, therefore now look not on him, but on me, and for my sake accept of him, and be propitious to him.

So for infirmities, true O Father! his imperfections in duty are many, but I am to bear the iniquity of the holy offerings: and my righteousness is perfect, and that I present unto thee for him; now notwithstanding his weaknesses, for my merits, accept of his person, grant him his request, do him good. Thus Christ is the Angel, who offered up the prayers of the Saints with incense, Rev. 8:3, 4. Nay, Father accept and incline thine ears, I have deserved acceptance, & audience, &c.

SECT. IV

Secondly Christ was anointed to be a Prophet, so Deut. 18:18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, the which is expresly interpreted to be Christ, by Peter, in Act. 3:20, 22. Therefore Christ is called Counsellor, Isa. 9:6. one who doth advise, and direct his Church; and the Doctor or Teacher, Mat. 23:8. and the Apostle of our profession, Heb. 3:1. and the faithful witness, Rev. 1:5. and a

witness to the people, Isa. 55:4. a Leader and a Commander, yea, hee is called the Light of his Church, Isa. 61:1. and the light of the world, Luke 2:32. (that is) it is he who did reveal to the world, the true Doctrine of eternal life, and the Angel of the Covenant, Mal. 3:1. and the Bishop of our souls, 1 Pet. 2:25. and the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1:24.

The anointing of Christ to be a Prophet, implies,

1 That he was to reveal the will of his Father, and the ways of life, Joh. 15:15. All things that I have heard of my Father, have I made known unto you, so Heb. 1:2. In these last days he hath spoken to us by his Son, Joh. 6:68. Master, to whom should we go, thou hast the words of eternal life? see Isa. 61:2; Mat. 11:27.

There is no person, who must dare to prescribe any other doctrine, but such as Christ hath delivered. He may not coin new Articles of faith, nor of obedience; Christ is appointed to be the Prophet of his Church, (that is) to deliver unto them all such truths from his father, which shall and do concern their everlasting salvation.

2 That he is to make us know effectually the things which he doth reveal in his word. There is no Prophet able to convey his doctrine beyond the ear, though it be as true as truth it self; and as good as goodness itself; we cannot make men to understand it, nor to believe it, nor to yield unto it; but Christ is that Prophet, whose Chair is in heaven, and whose speaking can yet pierce into the hearts of men: He can make us to know wisdom, he can teach our reins, & truth in the inward parts, there can he write his Law in our hearts; though the mind be as dark as darkness it self, yet he can make the light of knowledge to arise in the thickest darkness of the mind; though the judgement be corrupt, & full of errors, yet Christ can erect a throne of truth, and direct us into the paths of righteousness; though the heart be dull, yet his words are as fire to quicken that heart; though it be as hard as the rock, yet his word can be as the hammer to break that stony heart: His teaching can soften the most unflexible

adamant, he is able to convince, and bend, and alter, and bow it; the very dead shal hear his voice, and live. So that if any person doth need any directions, any enablement for heaven, or the way thither, he must know that Christ is the Prophet anointed; whatsoever belongs to an heavenly instructing, and to an heavenly drawing, and obeying, that is to be found in Christ, and had from him who is anointed a Prophet, that is, designed to teach the Church, and furnisheth with all the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge, and ability, &c.

SECT. V

Lastly, Christ was anointed to be a King; therefore Psal. 2:2. he is called Gods anointed; and ver. 6. the King whom he did set upon his holy hill of Sion. The King of Kings, Rev. 19:16. He shall reign over the house of Jacob, Luk.1:33. so Mat. 28:18. All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. He hath the Scepter of Royalty, and the Rod of authority, and the sword of power, and the throne of judgement, and the Laws of his lips, and the keys of life and death.

Now this regal office of his, to which he was anointed, imports many things.

First, that he is to bear rule over all the Nations; and indeed his natural Kingdom reacheth over all the world, from the highest Angel to the lowest Devil.

Secondly, that he is to Govern and rule the Church, which he hath purchased with his blood; The Government is upon his shoulders, Isa. 9:6. And therefore he is called the Law-giver, Jam. 4:12. and all judgement is committed to his hand, Joh 5:22, 27. to this end, you have the rod of his Scepter, his holy and righteous Laws, and his mighty and blessed Spirit, to give force unto them, even into our hearts, and there to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Thirdly, that he is to maintain and uphold his Church, therefore he is said, to gird his sword upon his thigh, Psal. 45:3. and to ride upon a horse with his garment dipped in blood, and armed, as if he were ready to fight. He is the mighty redeemer of his servants against all who intrench upon their peace and safety; & he strikes down Paul to the earth for persecuting him.

It belongs to the King to be the defence of his subjects: so here, God hath appointed all the Protections, and safeties, and deliverances of the Church, to be in Christ.

Fourthly, he is to conquer all his and our enemies; God hath given Christ a Kingdom, but it is such as he must fight for; Not a Subject which he hath, which comes in unto him, but by conquest; It we be in our own hands, peccatum Host is est quamdiu est, said Saint Augustin, and if we be in Satans hands, wee are in that enemies hands.

More plainly, there are these enemies of Christ and his Church, which he is to conquer for himself and them.

First hell, and we read that he hath spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, and triumphed over them Col. 2:15.

Secondly death, 1 Cor. 15:54. Death is swallowed up in victory, 55. O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory! &c. 56, 57. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly sin, and this is Christ also to conquer; he is to cast down all the strong holds of lusts, and all imaginations, and to captivate the whole man: He is to subdue our iniquities for us, and not to suffer sin to have dominion over us.

Fourthly, Wicked men; he will stick his arrows in the breasts of Princes, and in the hearts of the mighty, and terrible; he is to bruise

the Nations with a rod of Iron, and to dash them in pieces like a potters vessel: He will execute judgement upon all of them, and cast them all to the dust, who rose up against his person, or Government, or people. He will set his people at rest from them that rise against them, and will make his enemies his foot-stool.

CHAP. IV

What Beleeving in the Lord Jesus Christ doth import

Quest. 2. What doth the believing in the Lord Jesus Christ import?

Jesus Christ is like a ring, and faith is like the finger which wears it He is like a treasury, and faith like the hand which draws out thence. As David spake in another kinde, come and I will tell you what the Lord hath done for my soul! or as Philip to Nathanael, can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith, come and see. The same is to be said of saith, God hath done great matters for sinful man, saith faith, Why? but can any good be brought by any to us who are so bad? yes, says faith, come and see, Christ is very good, he is a Saviour for a poor sinner, but it is faith which finds him so.

Mark the answer of the Apostles here in the text, what shall I do to be saved, saith the Jaylor?

They do not answer, there is a Jesus Christ, take thou no more care; he did dye for sinners, and thou shalt do well enough: Nay, this they answer, thou maist be saved by Christ, but thou must beleeve in Christ. Not a medicine is the remedy, but a medicine applied. Not the man, but the man taken, becomes the husband; So the taking of Christ, the believing in him, is the way to heaven.

Because this is an excellent point (for our life lies in it) give me leave to speak somewhat of faith.

First, in the general, and there I will be brief.

Secondly, in special, of justifying faith, or faith believing in Jesus Christ our Lord.

First, Generally.

For the general nature of believing, observe these propositions.

First, that believing is an assent to such matters as are known onely by revelation from another; there are in the soul of man three qualities by which wee come to finde out, or perceive things.

First, one quality is, Scientia, or knowledge, which is a firm assent unto a thing which may be evidenced to the understanding by solid demonstration of infallible principles, or else by the undeniable evidence of sense, and experience: as thus, that every natural body hath power to move, or that the Moon will suffer an Eclipse, or that the fire is naturally apt to ascend, and the water to moisten, &c.

These things have both a natural certainty, and truth in themselves, and there is an undoubted evidence and certainty in the mind of the person, truly knowing them; and so certain and full is the perswasion of the mind about them, that there is no scruple of doubt remaining to discuss, as any uncertainty whether the things be so or no.

2 Another is, opinion, which is an inevident evident assent, if I may so phrase it: My meaning is, the understanding doth so assent, and yield to the things, as that yet it sees some contrary reason to suspect and question whether the thing be so or no; for as much as (in opinion) the grounds are not fully evident to the mind, but they are onely probable, and therefore the assent by opinion, is but conjectural. As, take a man in a case of a scrupulous conscience, there is to that man some evidence of argument which doth seem to

warrant his action or attempt, & yet that argument is not so entirely convincing of his judgement, but on the other side, there starts up a medium or argument, which renders the practice probably sinful; whereupon if you come to demand of him, May you do such a thing? he answers, I do not certainly know, that is, I am not entirely and absolutely resolved of it, yet I think I may, I think it is lawful; and this thinking (which is opinion) is always accompanied with some fear and suspicion; so that the mind is like a pair of scales, tottering and tilting to either side. Things are partly clear, and partly obscure, partly evident, and partly inevident, and therefore the assent of opinion is always doubtful.

3 Another is, believe, which is an assent unto things, not from any evidence of the things themselves, but onely from the relation, or testimony of another.

If I feel the fire to burn my hand, I do not call this a believing, but a sensitive knowing, if Ahimaaz comes and tells David, that his Son Absalom is hanged and slain, though this be knowledge in him who saw it, yet it is belief in David, who did hear and credit the tidings; so that (to be brief) belief differs from knowledge in this, that knowledge depends on the evidence of things themselves; but belief, though the things be certainly true to which it doth assent, yet it assents unto them for the testimony or authority of him who relates and reports them. Though this be most true, That Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, and that he is the Messias and Saviour, yet I believe it to be true, because God hath given testimony or report thereof in his Word unto me.

Again, Belief differs from opinion in this, that opinion is an indifferent, probable, hazarding, and difficultly inclinable assent, but in believing, the assent is firm, certain, and fixed, especially where testimony and authority is sufficient.

2 Believing as it is restrained to a theological and divine consideration, that is (in the general) an assent of the soul to the

truth, and goodness, of all divine revelations upon divine testimony. Here much might be said, as for instance.

First, that all divine revelations are the object of belief, as supernaturally inspired.

Secondly, that the ground of believing them is Gods own testimony. Faith hath sufficient reason to believe all things there to be true, in their relation; because of his truth and authority who doth say so (viz.) God himself.

Thirdly, of the general nature of believing, which is an assent unto all spoken by God, as most true and credible.

Secondly, particularly, of justifying faith.

Faith (as you well know) hath a double aspect, one is to the whole revealed Word of God, another is to God in Christ, or to Jesus Christ.

I am not now to speak of it, as an eye which may see all colours, but as an eye fixing it self on some singular and special object (viz.) on Jesus Christ, in respect of whom, it is called justifying faith: The believing on whom may be thus described.

CHAP. V

Faith in Christ, what, described

It is a singular Grace of God, whereby the heart and will of a sensible sinner, doth take and embrace Jesus Christ in his person and offices, and doth wholly or onely rest on him for pardon of sin, and eternal life.

There are many things to be opened in this description, forasmuch as all the force of true faith, cannot at once in a few short words be clearly expressed.

SECT. I

Consider therefore, the spring or fountain of this faith is at heaven: Gods eternal decree is the radical cause of it: so Acts 13:48. As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed; and the instrumental cause of it is the Word of God, Rom. 10:17. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, and the immediate and singular cause of it is the Spirit of God Gal. 5:22. there it is an express fruit. So Joh. 1:12. speaking particularly of believing on the Name of Christ, he addeth, verse 13. men come to this, not bring born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

That the will or heart of man should be brought off from it self, and to abhor its own condition and sufficiency, and to take Christ as God propounds him, to be the only rock upon which I must build my Salvation, to be the only Lord, to whose Law and Will I must resign up my whole soul, and to cleave unto him in a conjugal union and affection; This I say ariseth, not from natural principles, nor from the wisdom of a mans free will, nor from any endeavour or action which can find footing in man himself.

It is observed that there are two sorts of habits.

1 Some which are acquired by the industry of the person, and through a right use of a sagacious & understanding mind, and such may be purchased by practice, and use; as the Scholar by writing, gets the habit of writing, and the Apprentise by his wise and honest observation, and industry, gets into the skill of his trade and calling, Now faith is no such quality, we can send forth no such singular acts or operations, which are able in time to ripen or beget so excellent a Grace in the soul.

2 Others are plainly and entirely infused. Faith is not water in the Earth, which a man may pump out but it is even in the fulness or littleness of it, in the allness of it, as the drops or showers of rain, which come from heaven: Though the subject of it be below, yet the cause of it is above; it is man who doth believe, but it is Gods Spirit alone who gives him that faith to believe; it is the will of man which doth take and receive Christ, but it is Gods Spirit who doth bestow that grace of faith, by which he doth take and receive.

That a man hath a will none can deny, who know that they are men; Nay, and that the will is able to send out its own actions, it is willingly confessed; but infinite is the difference 'twixt the natural actions of the will, and the supernatural qualities and operation of Gods Spirit in the will: It is true, a dead carcase is able of it self to send forth a stinking smell, but it is not able to quicken and enliven it self. That the will can, wil I grant, but that the wil can (of it self) enliven it self, to that great part of life, I mean believing, it is not only a vehement injury and dishonour to the fountain and freeness of grace, but also a most foolish and senseless error; the will of man being naturally so opposite to believing, and believing being an act so every way unsuitable and disproportionable to the inclination and ability of the will. No verily, faith in God comes from God, and so faith in Christ from Christ; none ever could see Christ in a justifying and saving way, who had not that eye of faith put into him by the Spirit of Christ: no grace comes from any, but the God of Grace. Unto you it is given to believe, Phil. 1:29.

SECT. II

The subject of this Faith, is a sensible sinner; I do not as yet speak of the immediate subject of inhesion, which respects those parts of the soul, wherein this grace is seated; of this I shall speak anon: But of the subject of denomination, and this subject is a sensible sinner.

There are two sorts of sinners.

1 Some generally corrupted, both in their natures, and in their lives, and they are as unsensible as they are sinful. They do not know in any powerful degree of true reflection and feeling, their own vileness, accursedness, and miserableness of persons being so, and remaining so in an unsensible condition of sinfulness. I dare confidently affirm, that though they may have most able and strong presumptions, yet they have not (as yet) the least degree of justifying & saving faith. How can any man by Faith look upon Jesus Christ as his Physician, who is whole in his own opinion? The unsensible sinner, as he cannot close with Christ, so he will not care for Christ; for what should now move such an heart? is it this holiness of Christs person? Good Lord! How ridiculous is that motive to a prophane and graceless heart! or is it the suitableness of Christs Office? Why, what is Salvation to him by another, who as yet sees no ground or reason of condemnation in himself?

2 Others sensibly experienced, who know thus much, that they in particular are sinful, and there is no salvation, no hope of it from themselves, but it is to be found onely in Jesus Christ. I confess there are several degrees of this sensibleness; neither dare I to assign the height and latitude of it unto the terms of horror and terror, (that is) that a person must bee always and necessarily anguished with extremities of amazement and dejections, before he can believe in Christ: No, though these sharp throws are manifest in some, yet I dare not make them a rule for all: onely this I say, that the heart believes not, it looks not towards Christ, till it feel it self to be sinful, and lost by reason of sin; and that there is no possibility of subsistence in it self: And now there is room for faith when I feel my self a sinner: now there is reason for me to look upon a Saviour, and when I am sensible of my own vileness, now is there reason to look upon another righteousness; and when I perceive my own lostness, now is there cause to look after that salvation which God hath put in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Me thinks that of Christ, he came not to call the righteous, but sinners, that he is sent to finde that which is lost, that the whole need

not a Physician, but the sick, that he is sent to preach liberty to the captives, do abundantly confirm this truth: Yea, and our own experiences give in a clear evidence, that not only in the beginning, but in the progress of our conversion, our eyes are then most upon Christ, to look after him, and to prize him, when we are most sensibly acquainted with our own sinfulness, and miserableness of condition.

SECT. III

The Seat or habitation of Faith, is the heart or will: Scriptures are copious in this, Rom. 10:10. with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, Acts 8:37. And Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest, and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Rev. 22.v.11. whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

There bee who distinguish 'twixt three kindes of Faith.

First, *Credere Deum* which is an universal and large conception of a God, when the understanding is perswaded (beyond Atheism) to believe that there is a God.

Secondly, *Credere Deo*, and this is such a disposition of the understanding, by which it gives credit or belief to that God, speaking and revealing, as to one who is truth, and cannot lye.

Thirdly, *Credere in Deum*, which is not onely a credence to God, as true in his Nature and Word; but a reliance on him with the will, and embracing of him and his truth and goodness with the affections.

Now justifying faith, or faith in Christ, is comprehended in this latter kind of believing. For the better apprehending of this, observe a few things (*viz.*) First, the things which God doth propound unto us, are of different ends and uses; Some are propounded meerly to be known, of which sort some conjecture many best orical passages in the Word, and many predictions, and many Genealogies; Some are

propounded; not only to be known, but also to be done, as the Divine Precepts, or Commandments; Some are propounded to be known, and to be avoided, or declined, as all the comminations and threatnings in the Word against sinners; Some are propounded to be known, and to be embraced with the will and affections, of which sort are all the Promises of God, and Jesus Christ our Lord. All those parts of the Word which contain our good, and our good to be embraced they have a necessary and natural reference to the will of man, which is planted in us by God, to be conversant about all that which respects our good. Since then Jesus Christ is our good, both personally considered, and also vertually considered; Faith therefore as conversant about him, must naturally be planted in the will.

That there are two parts (as it were) of Faith.

One is imperfect and incompleat, yet is it a necessary ingredient unto Faith, and this respects the understanding, when we are supernaturally illightned, to see the Gospel and Jesus Christ in it revealed to be a Saviour; yea, and we do assent or acknowledge the same Gospel to be a word of truth, and that whatsoever yet it doth affirm of Jesus Christ, it is infallibly true, and divinely certain. The Gospel, as the Word of truth, is the object of this, and therefore the understanding is to apprehend and acknowledge it.

Another is perfect, (I speak of an essential perfection, not of that which is gradual and intensive,) which takes in the formal and vital nature of Faith, as justifying: Now this doth not rest in any operation of the minde, or understanding, but immediately in the will, for the Gospel contains both truth and goodness; It is the Word of truth, and the Gospel of Salvation. It doth not onely make known a Saviour, and that it is most certain that he is God and man, and died for sinners, but it doth offer the goodness of this Saviour unto me, which to accept, appertains directly and immediately to the will: That of the Apostle me thinks gives some light to the matter in hand, 1 Tim, 1:15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

That Jesus Christ came to save sinners, is a truth not to be questioned, and therefore the understanding is to acknowledge the same; And that he came to save sinners, is not only a truth revealed, but a goodness offered, and therefore it is worthy of all acceptation; Now as credence of the truth of it, appertains to the understanding, so the acceptance of the goodness of it, doth appertain to the will: Yea, one word more: it is the proper work of faith to conjoyn the soul with Christ, to contract and espouse it, (as it were) but the soul is not conjoynd with Christ by the meer operation of the understanding, but by the consent of the will; Ergo Faith as justifying, is immediately and formally in the will, and not nakedly in the understanding.

SECT. IV

The proper and genuin act of Faith, as justifying, or as conversant about Jesus Christ, is acceptance, or receiving. This Doctrine Christ himself doth teach, and therefore it is true, and sure, Job. 1:12. To as many as received him, he gave power to be the Sons of God, even to as many as believed in his Name. There you see expresly that believing is the receiving of Christ. As if God came in these terms, I have appointed my Son to be made man, to be a Mediator and Redeemer, and he did live and dye for sinners, to procure their peace and salvation: Now I offer his person unto you, and with it all the merits and benefits purchased by him, take him in his person, in his offices, and in all his vertues. If the heart doth now accept of the Lord Jesus, This is a lively, and justifying, and saying believing. There are three acts of the soul which are conversant about Christ.

First, one is, I know assuredly, That Jesus Christ the Lord is the Saviour of sinners. The Papists generally make this the Royal Act of Faith, but this cannot be justifying Faith:

because

First, this as so, is but a truth apprehended, and not a good received.

Secondly, unbelieving hearts may enjoy this historical assent meerly as assent.

2 Another is, I take this Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Saviour; I know assuredly he is a Lord and Saviour, and he offers himself unto poor sinners, of whom I am chief, and I do accept of him to be my Lord and Saviour: I cast my soul on him, I rest my self on him, my will and heart doth embrace and accept of him, onely to be Lord and Saviour; him I do, and none but him I do accept,

3 A third is, I know assuredly that Jesus Christ is my Lord and my Saviour. Many of the Lutherans (and some of our own) bend this way, that the essential and proper act of Faith as justifying, is assurance, and so they do define it, that it is an assurance, a full assurance, a full perswasion, whence it follows,

That no man believes, until he can truly say, I know that Christ is mine, I know that he died for me, I know that my sins are pardoned.

It is not meet to take Arms, and strike our own brethren; who I think in this, rather aimed to give us Faith in its perfection, than in its proper and substantial nature.

These things must needs be confessed.

1 That the assurance of Faith may be possibly attained unto. God hath exhorted Christians to strive after assurance, yea, full assurance, yea, the riches of full assurance, and no doubt, that not only Paul, but many a good Christian can say (somtime or other) I am verily perswaded, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.

2 That the assurance of faith is a most heavenly and comfortable condition. O the heavenly sweetness, and divine solace, contentment, affection! When I do not only possess Christ, but I know that I do possess him; when I do not onely take him to be mine, but see him to be mine, when he faith to me, Be of good cheer, it is I, or, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Thirdly, that believers should strive after this assurance, they should not rest in the meer acceptance, but should contend in prayer, for the evidence and reflection of this Faith, that Christ is theirs, & they know him assuredly to be theirs. For though the estate of meer believing is sure, yet that of assurance is comfortable. That is a true day, when the Sun is rising, but when it comes to the highest, the day is now glorious. Yet this I deny, that assurance, (I mean, that reflexive perswasion, that Christ is mine) is the essential or proper act of Faith, that Faith is not Faith unless it be assurance.

There are two acts of Faith.

One without which Faith cannot be justifying Faith, and this is the acceptance or embracing of Christ, or that which some call reliance and recumbency.

Another, which in time Faith may produce; and so assurance is an act of Faith, not the necessary act, but the circumstantial act, as it were, not the vital act, but the eminent act; assurance of Faith, is fire blazing, the acceptance of Faith, is fire truly burning, though not highly flaming; the more high faith doth rise at any time, the less doubtings there are, and the more assurance. And yet faith may be in truth, though it hath no reflexive assurance, but many doubtings: Why didst thou doubt (said Christ) O thou of little Faith? Faith, though little faith, and faith, though doubting, as fire, though much smoke; and yet no doubting, if Faith were essentially assurance.

O how many souls are there who prize none in the world like Christ, who love him with all their hearts, who honour him with the highest regards of a Lord, who hate the enemies of his Scepter with a perfect hatred, who would not willingly offend, and grieve him in the least measure, who cleave unto him as the only rock of their salvation, who would not relinquish their interest in him for millions of worlds; And yet they weep with Mary, (because) they cannot see their Lord; they conflict day and night with fears and doubts, they have not this reflexive evidence and assurance, that Christ is their Christ, that

Jesus is their Jesus, that this Lord is their Lord; yet ask them, are you willing to accept of him? O none in the world rather, or more: are you willing that he should be your Saviour? he only is salvation: can you submit to have him to be your Lord Christ? O blessed Saviour (saith the soul) none to rule me but thou; none to save me but thou, thy blood is precious, and thy Laws are righteous, and I could bestow a thousand hearts, and a thousand lives if I had them, on thee, to be changed, guided, ruled, ordered by thee.

And thus the soul, though it cannot see him, yet it believes on him; it believes on him, though as yet it cannot say, that my beloved is mine, and I am his.

CHAP. VI

The object of Justifying Faith

Now I come to the object of justifying Faith, and that is two-fold. First, Immediate, which is Jesus Christ our Lord. Secondly, Concomitant or Consequent, which is Remission, and Righteousness, and Salvation: for faith first takes Christ himself, and then these, in & for Christ.

SECT. I

The immediate object of Faith, as justifying, is Jesus Christ himself; as it is in Marriage, marriage is an action 'twixt person and person, not 'twixt person and estate, that is a resulting thing, so is it in the nature of faith and Christ. Faith doth not match the soul to the portion, to the benefits, but to the person of Christ.

You hear that God hath put salvation into Christs hand, he hath put remission of sins into his blood; there is eternal life to be had by him. Now if a person saith, I will have this salvation by Christ, which he hath purchased, but I will not have his person, I will have the remission of sins by his blood, but I care not for his person, I will have his righteousness, by which I may stand before God, but I care not for his person; this now is no faith, it is no justifying faith. For faith justifieth us when we take the person of Christ. It is true, that we may, and should have an eye to the purchase and benefit by Christ, but Christ himself is that which faith looks upon.

But wherein is the person of Christ the object of justifying faith?

For the resolution of this, I will open two things.

First, that whole Christ is the proper object of faith.

Secondly, how faith doth exercise it self about whole Christ.

SECT. II

Whole Christ is the adequate and proper object, Christ you know (in respect of his person) is God and man, and he may be considered as a Priest, or as a Prophet, or as a King; we usually say, as a Saviour, and as a Lord. Now he offers himself in all these to sinners: saith Christ, there is no Name under heaven by which you can be saved, but by me, no Jesus but my self, and I have been the Priest, who have offered my heart blood to procure the pardon of your sins, and salvation: I have satisfied my Father to the utmost, and have fulfilled all righteousness. Now I am willing to bestow my self on you, as one who can and will assuredly save you. But if you would have me to be your Priest, to save you, you must also be willing to have me to be your Prophet, to instruct you, and direct you; and to be your King and Lord, to command you, you must resign up your self to my Scepter and Government; for I am a Lord as Well as a Saviour, and I will be taken in both, or else you shall have part in neither.

There be three things which lye hard on us.

One is, the guilt of sin; which exposeth the soul to hell, and wrath, for which Christ is a Saviour and a Priest. He became a curse for us, and bare our sins, (that is) stood in our stead, and under-went that indignation, which else should have lighted on us.

Another is, the corruption or pollution of sin; which breeds inconformity to Gods Will, and depraves the whole nature, for which Christ is a Saviour and a Prophet, (that is) he is appointed to inform the mind, and reform the heart.

A third is, the rebellion of sin; rising sinful notions, and sordid delights and ways, for which Christ is a Saviour and a King, (that is) he is to subdue those iniquities, to give them the bill of divorce, to captivate all imaginations, and to bring the whole man into the subjection of himself; but then he will be Jesus and Lord too; thou maist not think that Christ must save thee, and sin shall rule thee; thou must not think that he will pay thy debts, if thou wilt give thy heart and service to sin and the world. How ridiculous is it to conceive that God should raise up Christ, as the Pope raiseth up his indulgences, onely to keep or fetch souls out of Purgatory? as if Christ were given only to pay our scores, and not to rule our hearts, for no other end but to keep us out of prison, that we might do nothing but sin against God, because Christ can take away the guilt of sin.

Nay, whole Christ is eyed by faith, taken and received by faith. Do I feel my sinful guilt? I now by faith take Jesus Christ, whom the father hath appointed and offered to be my Priest, to be my surety, to bear my sins, to stand twixt God and me. Do I feel my sinful nature & motions? I now take Jesus Christ whom the Father hath appointed to be my Prophet and King; He hath undertaken to be the teacher of hearts, and conquerer of sin; as so I do take him to be my Lord.

SECT. III

Therefore consider in the second place, How faith doth exercise it self about whole Christ: if you please I will discover it in the particulars.

For Christ, as a Saviour and Priest: Thus faith looks on him, not onely that he is so, but to be so to me; he was God and man, and died, and satisfied, and took away sin; God proclaims thus much, & offers him to me, here is the Saviour of the world, this is my well beloved Son, here is the blood of atonement and peace. What doth faith now? O faith takes hold on him, I acknowledge him, I receive him, O Lord to be my Saviour and Priest; not I, O Lord, not I could have ever have sustained thy wrath, or satisfied thy justice, I could never have made my own peace, I could never have blotted out the hand-writing, I could never have paid my debts, but thou hast set forth Christ to be the propitiation for sin. O Lord, I embrace him, my life is in his death, my healings in his sufferings, my satisfaction in his obedience; in none but him; I rest on none but him, on him I do believe, hee hath satisfied to the utmost, and I trust on him that he hath done it for me.

Brethren, the case stands thus, a man is born in sin, and he goes on in much sin, (a long time) at length God awakens his conscience, makes him to possess the iniquities of his heels, of his birth, of his youth, of his age, of his life, and perhaps besets the soul round about with some sensible dread of his infinite displeasure. Now the man knows not what to do: good Lord saith he, what a miserable creature am I? here's sin committed over and over, the Law broken, God provoked, conscience raging, hell gaping; I am violated saith the Law, wronged saith Justice, thou hast sinned saith Conscience, I will be satisfied saith the Lord, saith the poor soul, what shall become of me? what have I to quiet God? I can finde nothing, what shall I do to pacifie him? I cannot imagine it: If I say that I have not sinned, my conscience tells me I lye, If I say I will not sin hereafter, Why? yet how will this satisfie for former guilt? I tell you brethren, that a heart brought to this sensible experience, is marvelously oppressed, the

very heart cracks, and the sins of that soul snap asunder, under the sense of manifold guilt, and Gods displeasure.

But then God comes in the Gospel, and calls out to the poor and distressed sinner, come hither saith God, I will shew thee a way of salvation. O how the soul listens to such a message! but how Lord can this be? what am I? or what can I do? Nothing saith God, for thou art an enemy, and thou art without strength: But I have laid Salvation upon one that is Mighty; Who is that Lord? It is my own Son, whom I have out of my love sent into the world to be made man, and to die, and satisfie for sinners, to bear their iniquities, to answer for all their transgressions, and he is become a surety, and a Priest, and hath sacrificed his own soul? to be an offering for sin, & I offer him unto thee, to be thy surety, to be thy Priest, to take away thy sins: Now take him saith God to the soul, and with him the discharge of thy sins. Hereupon the soul being perswaded of the truth of this good testimony, and with many tears admiring at the riches of divine love and mercy, it doth now by faith close in with Christ, put it self upon him, embraceth him with all the heart, as a sufficient and perfect Saviour. As if the soul now fastning it self by faith on Christ, in this respect should thus bespeak the Lord.

O Lord, thou art pleased justly to charge my sins upon my conscience, I confess and am ashamed that I have thus sinned against thee, yea, and I acknowledge that I am never able to answer thee for those sins: But thou hast appointed thine own Son to be my Saviour and Priest, whose office it was to bear the sins of the people; these sins therefore which conscience now chargeth upon me, I do by faith charge upon thine own Son, for he was made sin for us; thou didst ordain him to be a surety, and therefore I beseech thee Lord look for satisfaction of my debts in his precious blood, and take away thy curse from my soul, for he was made a curse for us, he did sustain thy wrath in our stead to deliver from wrath: Now therefore, O Lord, I put my soul only upon thy only Son, whom I take to be my sacrifice, him I offer up unto thee as my propitiation; I have sinned, but thy Son hath died for my sins; I have provoked thee, but thy Son

hath pacified thee; I have wronged thee, but thy Son hath Satisfied thee; he did not die for his own sins, but for my sins, he was not made a curse for himself, but for me; I lay hold on his blood to be my peace, and satisfaction, and salvation. As if a man were like to be carried to prison for debt, and hunting up and down for a friend to stand for him, at length he finds one only man, and him he brings to the creditor and saith, here's a man will pay you, and ransom me; so faith for a troubled and obliged sinner to God, it finds out Christ, and saith, Lo Lord, here is thy Son, who is my surety, he will discharge, he is my ransom.

SECT. IV

For Christ as a Saviour, and King, and Prophet, and Lord, what is the exercise of faith there? I tell you what I think of it.

It is a work of a believing heart, whereby it doth accept of Christ, to be the sole teacher and ruler of heart and life, and resign up himself wholly to him, to be fashioned as it were, and guided by him. A man never comes to the truth of believing, but he shall find this, that faith will change his Master: For faith changeth the heart, and the heart being once changed, will quickly change its Lord. So that to believe on Christ as a King, as a Lord as a Prophet, it is to admit him, to give him up the whole man into his hands to his holy and spiritual Government. As if the heart should say thus much, thou art a Holy Christ, and thou art he who art to reign, now I take thee to be my Holy Lord, and I resign up my self, I pass over my self unto thee, I will have no Lord but thee, and I do with all my heart accept of thee, to make me Holy, as thou art Holy, and to subdue this vile heart of mine, and to rule in me by thy blessed and mighty Spirit.

SECT. V

Thus briefly of the immediate object of faith, on which faith immediately looks (viz.) the person of Jesus Christ: to take and

receive Christ as Lord and saviour, This is true faith; yet by the way note a few things.

First, that this taking in with all the heart, it is not a pretended taking, a dissembled work; there is a taking of Christ with the tongue, and a taking of him with the heart: O no, when true faith takes Christ, it brings in the very strength of the soul: O Lord Jesus, I do embrace thee, accept of thee with all my soul, with all my might, and with all my affections.

Secondly, this taking of Christ is of all Christ, of Lord as well as Jesus: when the heart is made sensible of sin and Satan, and world, and Christ, and now falls off from them, I will have no more to do with you, I will serve you no longer, Christ onely shall be my Saviour, and hee onely shall be my Lord, I will put my soul under his Scepter and Government.

Thirdly, this taking of Christ is onely of Christ. For it is a conjugal taking, which consists of unity: one (they say in the Metaphysicks) is undivided in it self, and divided from all besides itself; so is it in faiths taking of Christ, One Faith, One Lord, said the Apostle, Eph. 4. It takes Christ so as none with Christ, or besides Christ. The Patriarchs had most of them a wife, and a concubine, it is not so here: Faith doth match with an absolute exclusion of all other matches. It is not the soul, and Christ, and sin: nor the soul, and Christ, and the world: nor the soul, and Christ, and the Devil: it is not the soul, and Christ in chief, and sin in service as a deputy, or a corrival, a secondary thing, &c.

Fourthly, this taking is freed from mistaking. Faith knows what it doth, it sees its way, it understands, 1 Who that is whom it takes, 2 Upon what terms he will be taken, 3 Its grounds of taking.

First, who it is, (viz.) the Son of God, God and man, a most holy person, a mighty Redeemer, and Saviour.

Secondly, upon what terms, (viz.) He will not come in by the by, he will not bee taken as a vassal, as a captive, as a drudge: he will not bee taken for base and changeable reasons, meerly to stop a gap in the conscience, or onely in fair weather, but he will be taken as Lord and King, to command all the heart, to dispose all the ways, to rule our very thoughts, hee will bee taken for his own sake, out of a judicious love and estimation of his person, hee will bee taken with all the estates and conditions that befall, on the cross crucified, as well as in the way to Hierusalem magnified, as one persecuted and distressed on earth as well as one raised and glorified in Heaven; and thus true Faith takes Christ.

Thirdly, upon what grounds, viz. upon Gods offer of Christ, and promise, that whosoever believes on him, &c. and on his commandment, that wee should believe on the Name of his Son; whereupon faith brings in the soul to Christ, it believeth that God saith true, that hee doth not call upon men, hee doth not command men, hee doth not promise men, and all this to delude men; so that if you should ask faith what warrant had you to bring in such a soul to Christ? Why saith faith, God revealed, and offered his Son, and commanded me to believe, & promised not to cast off any that come, &c.

Fifthly, this taking is resolved against untaking. All takings are not of the same force and power; If I take a servant, I take him so, that upon good reasons and occasions I can put him off again; but if I take a wife, there can bee no untaking on my part, unless God takes her, I must never forsake her. Faith takes Christ this way, to bee a Saviour for ever, to be a Head, an Husband, a Lord for ever: I observe that there are two kindes of taking Christ to bee a Lord, one is compulsory and violent, as when an enemy is made to rule; a man in a sickness, in a terror of conscience, in a day of wrath, in an expectation of death, hee will take Christ to be his Lord, hee will say, Oh! sin is vile, I abhor it, I will become a new man, I will have none but the Lord Christ, and he onely shall bee my Lord; and hereupon the man sets about the work of shewing that Christ is his Lord, hee

will command his servants to pray, to hear, to read, to keep the Sabbath, &c. Yet this man as soon as Gods hand is off, as soon as ever hee is freed from his bands, hee will like a lewd Apprentise, break loose from his Lord and Master, hee will serve Christ no longer, he will to his sins again, to the world again, to his base society again, &c. Why? because this accepting was onely violent, and no actions are stedfast, or constant, whose causes are compelling and violent.

Another is, ingenious of faith, and this taking of Christ is grounded onely in Christ, in its excellencies, beauties, perfections, which are not like the light of a candle, this hour very clear, and the next none at all, but like light in the Sun, still abiding and remaining; and therefore when a man doth by faith take Christ, he takes him for ever: for faith can never change for the better, and it sees stedfast reason in Christ, to cleave to Christ.

Now I come to the consequent object of faith, and hat is, remission of sins and righteousness, and whatsoever good comes from Christ.

For thus it is, faith doth order its motions, or actions according to the word; Now the word reveals and offers Christ first, and then the benefits next. It is not, whosoever beleeves eternal life, shall have Christ the Son of God, but whosoever beleeves on the Son of God, shall have eternal life; Nor is it, whosoever beleeves the remission of sinnes, shall have Christ, but whosoever beleeves in Christ, shall have the Remission of sins.

Yet when faith hath made the soul to take Christ, it goes then from the person to the portion, from Christ to the good in Christ, and by him; for if Christ be ours, all is ours, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2.

SECT. VI

I Will therefore speak a word of faith, as conversant about, First, Remission of sinnes, Secondly, Righteousness.

For the first of these, viz. the pardon or remission of sins, Consider,

That remission of sins is an action of God, acquitting the guilt and the punishment, so that he will never reckon with the soul any more in a judicial way for those sins which are pardoned. As when the King throughly pardoneth a Malefactor, hee dischargeth him, and takes off the guilt, (we speak of it in respect of redundancy) that it shall not now prejudice the person any longer; so doth God when hee pardons sinne: Though hee doth not in this annihilate the sinne, (that is) make that to bee no sinne, which was sinne, yet hee doth prejudice sin (that is) hee takes off the guilt, that it shall never redound to the damnation of the sinner, no nor to his dammage.

Jesus Christ hath procured remission of pardon of sin for us, hence, Ephes. 1:7. In whom you have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of your sins. His blood was shed for many, for the remission of sins, Mat. 26. (that is) he did die, and by his death hath merited and procured our pardon and discharge: God offering Christ, offers with him the purchase of Christ, viz. the pardon of sins; If you will take my Son, I will pardon your sins. Now faith inclines the soul, which is sensible of its sinful guilt, to put it self on Jesus Christ for the discharge of them: As the wife looks for none, and goes to none but to her husband to discharge her debts, so faith goes to none for to procure remission of sins, but only to Christ, and on him doth it rest. O Lord Christ, saith faith, thou didst take these my sinful debts upon thee, and thou didst undertake to satisfie for them, and to get them to bee blotted out, yea, and I know that thou didst make a full satisfaction. Now I renounce all hope of pardon from any thing in mee, and do rest my soul on thy precious blood, trusting that it was shed for the remission of my sins; I have taken thee to bee my Christ, and therefore I commit the answering of my sinful debt, to thy full satisfaction and sufferings. Put the case to a beleiving heart, you have many sinful debts to answer for, sins before conversion, and sins after conversion; sins of ignorance, and sins of knowledge; these sins have that in them which bindes you over to wrath and curse; now to whom doth it belong to pardon these sins? your soul answers, to God, who can forgive sins but God onely? And I, even I am hee that blotteth out thy sinnes, &c. yea, but for whose sake will

God pardon them? the soul answers, onely for Christ Jesus sake, for hee did shed his blood for their remission, and therefore Faith goes with the soul to Christ, and saith, O blessed Saviour, thy blood was shed for the remission of sinnes, and thou hast invited all that are heavy laden to come unto thee, and thou wilt ease them: Thou sayest, if any man sin, hee hath an advocate with the Father: Jesus Christ the righteous, and hee is the propitiation for sinnes. Now I am thus and thus sinful, and these guilts lie upon my conscience, I am never able to get them to bee pardoned for any thing in mee, but I do put my soul upon thee, and do trust to thee to get off these sinnes, I put them on thy account, yea, all of them, and do beleve that in thy blood they shall be pardoned, &c.

SECT. VII

Now for the second thing which faith looks on in Christ, and that is, Righteousness.

Beloved, this know, that God doth never Justifie a man, nor will ever save a man, who hath not a perfect Righteousness; for he is a Righteous God, and will not pronounce the sinner guiltless; his Law and Justice must be satisfied in all points, or else the sinner shall never come to heaven.

Now the soul of a person is marvelously distressed, when it seriously thinks of this; How shall I stand before the great and holy God another day, being by nature so wholly sinful, and at the best being but defectively and imperfectly good? But faith in this case brings the soul to Christ, and in him it findes a most perfect and absolute Righteousness: For whom saith the scrupulous soul? for thee, saith Faith; what for me? yea, for thee, for the Scripture saith, That Christ was made the righteousness of God for us, and that he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. So that if thou wouldest have such a righteousness, as may answer the Law, and satisfie God, and which God will accept for justification, thou must by faith get out of thy self, and lay hold on that

righteousness which is in Christ. As Paul, I account all things but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, Phil. 3:8, 9.

There is a two-fold righteousness.

One inherent, which is in us, and this imperfect, it can never justify us in the sight of God.

Another is imputed, which is not in us, yet it is for us; And this is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, both in his nature, and in his obedience; Active, and Passive; which God reckons unto him who doth believe in Christ, of which the Apostle abundantly in Rom. 4:12. c. 5. and on this doth faith rest onely in the matter of justification. Though inherent righteousness be absolutely required to salvation, yet no righteousness but that only which is Christs, and is imputed to believers, is the matter of our justification. When a sinner comes to account it with God, hee can never say, Lord, Lo here I am, see if there be any sin in my person, or defect in my holiness, I will expostulate with thee upon bare terms; I have not offended thee, or if I have, here's grace enough to answer for mee; my heart is wholly clean, my duties at all times in every respect, for matter and manner, have been performed just as thou requirest in thy holy Law, enter into judgement with mee if thou pleasest; I will be tryed by my own holiness, by my own goodness. O no, there can be no such thing, no sinner can be pronounced just this way, ever the Saints must cast their crowns to the ground, and give glory to the Lamb, who onely is worthy. For when we come to the point of justification before God, wee must renounce our own righteousness as filthy raggs, wee must cry out, enter not into judgement with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified.

But as they who were in danger, fled to the horns of the Altar for their lives, so must wee, if wee would be justified, fly by faith to the

Altar of Christs perfect righteousness; and so doth faith, when it would present the person of a sinner perfect and unblamable before God, It doth bring him unto Christ, and saith before God, I beleeve in him to be the Lord my righteousness.

CHAP. VII

How it may appear, that to Beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ, is the onely way to be saved

Before I give you the Arguments or Reasons to evince this, I must premise some particulars, viz.

First, That beleeving, or faith, may be considered four ways; either,

1 Absolutely, as a simple habit or quality of grace, apt to change the unbelievingness of the heart, and to send forth the acts of trusting and acceptance. Thus Faith is not the only way of salvation, partly because other habits are required as well as faith, and partly because there is not in faith, (absolutely considered) any meritorious dignity (of it self) to challenge salvation. Wee say, that a Ring is worth a hundred pound, not absolutely considered, not that the gold which makes the Ring amounts to that value, but in respect of the Diamond set in that Ring, so faith is a grace of wonderful price (much more precious than gold) Not so much in respect of it self, as if it did by its own natural dignity, cause our Justification and Salvation, but in respect of Christ, whose person it takes, and on whose righteousness it doth rely; so though this be true, we are justified by faith, yet this is as true, we are not justified for faith, but for Christ, on whom faith doth trust.

2 Actually, (that is) for the very act of beleeving: Arminius, and Birtius, and some of that cut, do say, That not the righteousness of Christ is that which justifieth, but the act of beleeving on it is that which is imputed in our Justification. A Righteousness of Christ, they do grant, but it is the act of our beleeving on this, which (by divine acceptation or favour) is imputed for righteousnesse; but this is a rotten opinion.

Because, first, it makes void the righteousness of Christ: by his blood wee are justified, Rom. 5:9. By his obedience are we made righteous, vers. 19. It this doth justifie us, then faith as an act doth not, unless we willbe doubly justified.

Secondly, no works of ours before or after grace, do justifie us: but the act of faith is one of these. Ergo,

3 Correlatively, (that is) with relation to Christ and his righteousness, and in this respect faith is the onely way: one faith well, saith doth not justifie as an action, but as a passion; his meaning is this, not faith apprehending, but the thing apprehended by faith doth justifie: It is true, I must by faith apprehend Christ if I will be saved; but it is not the apprehension which saves, but hee who is apprehended, is the cause of my salvation. If I were like to be drowned in the water, I must put forth my hand to him, who stands and reacheth out his hand unto me; yet it is not the meer putting forth of my hand which saves mee from drowning, but his hand which is laid hold on by mine, which draws me forth, and so I am preserved; both must meet, but the cause is in him.

4 Instrumentally, or in respect of office; you know well how to distinguish 'twixt actions a man doth as a man, and actions which a man doth as an officer: If a man be condemned, and ready for execution, and one comes from the King with the message of pardon, the delivering of this message is an act of his employment and office, not of his absolute nature, as a man only. Thus it is with faith, it sends out some actions, as an absolute grace, and it performs others

as a grace in office, as an instrument designed and deputed; It justifies us in this latter respect; not that it is the matter or cause which clears all for us with God, but because it is the instrument, laying hold on him who doth this for us: As the hand is said to cloathe the body, not that the hand is any cloathing (for a man doth not wear his hand) but because it is the instrument to put on our cloathing: or as the cup is said to quench our thirst, not that the metal of the cup can go down and satisfie that natural appetite, but because it holds that wine of liquor which doth quench; so doth faith justifie a sinner, not as the object, not as the cause, but as the instrument (that is) as the hand of the soul, laying hold on the Robes of Christ's righteousness, putting on that garment of his, and as an instrument, receiving, and holding, and bringing to the soul that precious blood of Christ, which only can (immediately) satisfie God, and appease a thirsty conscience.

2 Again, we must distinguish of the manner and peculiar habitudes, or respect of things unto salvation; some things have a reference to salvation by way of proper causality, which have in them a meritorious reason, for the proper dignity of which, a person is justified and saved; And in this respect we say, that beleiving in Jesus Christ is the only method, and way of salvation. Not that faith can (from its own worth) dispute and challenge from God, but because Jesus Christ, (who is the object of faith) hath as a cause merited our pardon, justification, and salvation.

Other things have a reference by way of order; As suppose a man were to be knighted by the King, to obtain this Knighthood, hee must come to the Court, and stoop down on his knee, and so receive that honour; This access to the Court, and humbling on his knee, is not a matter of merit or cause, but onely of order and condition: In this latter respect, we deny not but good works look towards salvation, and are required thereto, Not as any cause, (Christ only is the cause) but as conditions, and orderly steps, and ways, which wee must tread, if wee will be saved; *via ad regnum, non caus a regnandi.*

When we say, that believing in Christ Jesus is the only way to be saved; you must not understand it so, as if no other grace were required from a man but faith only, but thus, There is no other grace which lays hold on Christ, (who is the cause of salvation) but faith only: As it was with the Father of the Prodigal, when he met his Son falling down on his knees, he presently forgave him; but before he brought him into his house, he did cloath him with other garments: So doth God our Father, upon our humbling and believing, freely confer on us remission of sins for his Christ's sake; yet before he brings us to heaven, he doth invest our souls with the singular graces of his holy Spirit; yea, though justification be not sanctification, yet where God doth the one, he ever bestows and works the other. Therefore I pray you remember to distinguish 'twixt these two, justification, and sanctification, The person justified, and to be saved. Though this be most true, that there is no other meritorious cause of our justification and salvation, but only Christ, and there is no other instrument to lay hold on this, but faith, yet this is as true, that the person justified, and to be saved, hath more graces in him besides his faith; though there be not a co-operation of faith, and other graces, to justify; yet there is a co-existence of faith and other graces in the person justified. Thou must have good heart as well as a good Christ, and an holy life as well as a precious faith, or else thou shalt never come to heaven. You know that in the body of man, there be Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, and Hands to take, and Feet to go, of all these which are in the body, yet no members are deputed to see, but the eyes, nevertheless the eye must not say of the ears, I have no need of thee, nor the hand to the foot, I have no need of thee: it is granted, that no member sees but the eye, eats but the mouth, walks but the feet, lays hold on but the hands. Their offices are singular, yet their con-corporation is necessary. So no grace but faith, pitcheth on Christ, lays hold on him as the cause of salvation, yet there is need of other graces in the person to be saved. There must be love, and repentance, and godly sorrow, and true fear, and lively hope, and patience, and zeal, &c. The estate is changed, onely by the blood of Christ, but if we will be saved, the person must also be changed by the Spirit of Christ.

SECT. I

These things being thus premised, I shall now give you some arguments, by which the truth of the assertion shall appear.

First, there is no other way to be saved, but this, (viz.) to believe on Jesus Christ. Ergo it is the only way. Three things I take as granted Hypotheses.

First, that there is a Salvation for a sinner.

Secondly, that there is a way tending thereto, as a meritorious cause of it.

Thirdly, that every man is a sinner, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, Rom. 3:22.

Now then know, that there are but two ways of life, according to which there is a double Covenant. First, one Legal, Secondly, the other Evangelical. The Legal Covenant is, do this and live; the Evangelical Covenant is, believe and live. The Legal Covenant grounds salvation in our own persons, and the Evangelical, in the righteousness of another person. And these Covenants are opposite, that one cannot consist with the other. For (and mark this) though the Law and the Gospel may, and do, and shall consist, as the Law is a word of rule for obedience, yet they cannot possibly consist, in the Covenant of Justification, and salvation: (that is) whosoever will stand to the Covenant of works, to be justified by it, hee rejects the Covenant of grace, and so è contra.

Well then, this being true, that our life is to be had by the Covenant of Works, or of Grace, I will briefly shew unto you, that we sinners can never be justified and saved by the Legal Covenant, which if I clear, then it will be evident, that our salvation is only by faith in Jesus Christ.

Thus then, all the possibility to be justified and saved by the Legal Covenant, ariseth from one of these grounds, viz. either because,

That there is a fulness and exactness in inherent holiness; That there is a dignity and efficacy in actual obedience, which they call good works; That there is a latitude, or sufficiency of duty, to fulfil the Law, which may be conceived to be in a regenerate person; but none of these can justifie and save; Ergo,

For the first, viz. inherent holiness, this holiness is that which is wrought in our whole soul, by the Spirit of God, whereby of wicked, he makes us good; & of unholy, he makes us holy; and according to the several degrees of it is the person less or more holy. Now this we say, that though the justified person hath this infused inherent holiness, yet this is not that which can justifie him before God, (that is) for the dignity of which he can stand so before the judgement of God, as to be pronounced just and righteous, and so acquitted, which I prove thus.

1 That can never be the cause of our justification, which is defective and imperfect, and leaves yet the person in some measure sinful; I cannot in the Court of Justice be pronounced perfectly just, for that righteousness which is imperfectly just, no more than he can in a strict court be reputed to make full satisfaction, who hath not half paid his debt, or to be thoroughly well, who is scarce able to walk three turns in the Chamber: But that holiness which is in us, inherent holiness, is very imperfect, (I speak of that which is in us here on earth) it is not adequate or parallel to the whole will of God, which requires perfection of degrees, as well as of parts.

That it is imperfect, is as clear as day.

First, it is at combate with sin; Ergo it is not perfect: the argument is good, for whiles one contrary is mixed with the other, there is still imperfection; Sin and Grace are contrary, and conflictings shew imperfection, as victory notes perfection.

Secondly, that which may be encreased, is not perfect: but our inherent holiness may receive more encrease; Hence those many exhortations to perfect holiness, 2 Cor. 7:1. and to labour after perfection, 2 Cor. 1:3.

Thirdly, all the parts of holiness are imperfect. Faith is not so clear an eye, nor Hope so fixed an Anchor, nor Love so pure a stream, but that each of them need additions of degrees, of strength, of help. The Moon when it draweth into nearest conjunction with the Sun, and is filled with the longest beams of communicated light, it hath yet her spots, which like so many reproaches, stick in the heart of her; so is it with the holiest person on earth, with the largest measures of inherent graces, he hath yet great measures of sin, which like so many spots, do blemish and disable the soul to stand perfectly pure and just before the eyes of God.

2 That righteousness by which we are justified, is manifested without the Law. See Rom. 3:21. and what that righteousness is, hee expresseth in ver. 22. even unto the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that beleeve: But inherent righteousness is not manifested without the Law, Why? because the Law commands this inherent righteousness, (viz.) To love the Lord our God with all our hearts, &c.

That cannot be the cause of our justification and salvation, upon which the conscience dares not to rest in the secret agonies of conflict, or in the eminent hours of death: when the soul is to enter conflict with the wrath of God, being wounded with the sense of sin, and cited as it were before the tribunal of Gods holy and strict justice, dares it then to put it self seriously and in good earnest upon its own holiness, to make its peace, to be its propitiation, to satisfie the trials and demands of Gods Justice? One well observeth of the Papists, that when they are to dispute with men, they will plead for inherent holiness, but when they are to contend with God, they will flie only to Christ: tutissimum est, said Bellarmin. It was no ill meditation, that of Anselm, Conscientia mea meruit damnationem, &

Pænitentia mea non sufficit ad satisfactionem, sed certum est, quod misericordia tua superat omnem offensionem (that is) O Lord, my Conscience tells me, I have deserved damnation, all the repentance that I have or can perform, comes short of satisfaction, but thy mercy (even thy mercy only) can pardon, and so exceed all my transgressions.

4 The most holy persons do every day sin, and need dayly pardon, and dayly mercy; how then can we be justified or saved, for the merit or dignity of any holiness in our selves? How ridiculous were it, that hee should think himself to stand in great favour & acceptation before his Prince, for the singularity of his continued vertues and performances, who every day breaks out into such acts, which need the Kings gracious mercy and pardon?

2 There is no dignity or meritorious efficacy in actual holiness, or in good works, reason whereof we can be justified and saved.

I know this field is very large, I will not expatiate, but speak in a word of it, with a proper respect to the thing in hand, I prove the thing thus.

1 No man (since Adams fall) can perform works in that perfection which the Law of God requires, under the pain of eternal damnation. The perfection of good works (according to the strict exigence of the Law) consists especially in two things.

1 One is, that a man be able to perform them with all of his heart, and with a plenary love, without the intervening or slipping in of any evil inclination, or motion which abates that due and required intension, or in any measure sprinkleth or tainteth them with any defilement.

2 Another is, that a man is to perform good works in that manner, with a perpetual and constant tenour or course all his life. Those two are the ingredients of perfection, as appears by that of Christ, Thou shalt love the Lord, &c. And that of Paul, Hee is cursed that doth not continue in all that is written, &c. Gal. 3:10. These are the conditions

of works legally good, and which must justify a man, it he will be justified according to the Legal Covenant. But who can perform such perfect and good works? Adam might have done them, and Christ did; but what one sinner can? who can say, my heart is clean, and that we do not in many things offend all? Paul cries out, I am carnal, but the Law is spiritual: The good that he would do, he could not do, and the evil which hee would not do, that did he do. Good Lord! how often are wee at a loss in our most retired meditations, and how our hearts lye flat on earth, when our eyes look towards heaven in prayer? For one good work that we do, how many bad which wee should not do? like boys, for one fair line, twenty with blots and blurs; or like the Archers, whereas they hit the mark once, they miss it a hundred times: Let us but cast the accounts of our ill works with the good, and wee shall finde with shame and sorrow, that our good works are not equal with our bad in number, not so strong in dignity to wipe out the bad; but the bad, as they are more for number, so their cry of guilt is more meritorious, to cast both our persons and all our works before the judgement seat of God, than the good to ingratiate or merit for us.

2 What proportion 'twixt our works, and 'twixt our pardon and salvation? If Jacob be less than the least of outward benefits, Good God! how far more unworthy are we of the spiritual, yea of the Eternal? When wee have done all, wee have not done more than duty, and that can never be merit, which is but duty; nay, when we have done all we can, we have not done our duty, we are but unprofitable servants, and that which fails of duty, comes short of dignity or merit.

It is true, that God commands, accepts, delights in, will graciously reward good works; what, for their own sake? No, for his mercies sake, he will save the man whose heart is holy, and whose life is fruitful; What, for the works sake? No, but for his Christ's sake?

It cannot be denied, but that there is some relation 'twixt good works and salvation, as between the means and the end; but there is not

that relation as 'twixt an efficient cause, and an effect; for the efficient cause of our salvation is onely Gods grace and favour; Nor, as 'twixt a meritorious cause and the reward, for the meritorious cause of our salvation, is onely the obedience of Jesus Christ; Nor, as 'twixt an apprehensive cause, (may I use such an improper speech) for that only is faith, the instrument of our salvation, &c.

3 There is not in regenerate men such an adequation or full answerableness of duty, as to keep and fulfil the Law, as it is the Covenant of life and salvation.

There are divers Arguments to clear this, I will touch one or two.

1 Imperfect actions do not fulfil a perfect Rule, no more than a short line answers a long copy, or a line partly crooked, doth that which is streight: But the duties which regenerate men perform are imperfect actions, for as much as they flow from an imperfect agent, viz. from the soul of a Christian, which is partly spiritual, and partly carnal, not wholly spiritual, nor wholly carnal; even from this doth the Apostle conclude the impossibility (for us) to fulfil the Law, Rom. 8:3. viz. from the weakness or infirmity of the flesh, (that is) of the old man not yet fully purged and changed.

2 If any man could perfectly fulfil the Law, then some man had no need of Christ, either to be his Redeemer, or to be his Intercessor; for a Redeemer and Intercessor is, in case of transgression and failing, and so Christ should be to a regenerate person, at lead an idle and fruitless intercessor, for as much as it doth appertain to his intercession, to pacifie, and reconcile, and ingratiate: but what use of this, where all things and services are just already, as they should be, without any animadvertency of the Law against them? But Christ is an Intercessor, even for the Saints. Hee makes intercession for us, saith Paul, Rom. 8. and Saint John implies, that an Advocate is for a sinner, only for him, 1 Joh. 2:1. If any man sin, we have on Advocate, &c. It for a sinner only, then for a transgressor of the Law, and if for a transgressor of the Law, then not for one who doth perfectly fulfil it.

3 If the just must live by faith, then he cannot perfectly fulfil the Law, for then he might live by his works; but the just shall live by faith, Gal. 3:11. That no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident, for the just shall live by faith; Mark the place (shall live by faith) If it comes to the matter of life and death, then farewell works, Cursed is every one that doth not continue in all that is written to do them; If he will save his life, he must get him saith to fly to mercy, and Christ: yea, and mark of whom he speaks this, It is not of a person unconverted, but it is of the just, even the just must live by his faith, (that is) by Christ, on which faith doth rest, not by his own merits, works, obedience.

Now put all this together, there are but two ways to save a man, either by faith in Christ, or else by the observance of the Law: But none can observe the Law, so as to be justified by it; Because, 1 His holiness is short, 2 His works ineffectual, 3 His performances unanswerable; Ergo to believe in Christ, is the only way.

Every mouth is stopped (by the Law) and all the world is to become guilty before God; Therefore by the Deeds of the Law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin, Rom. 3:19, 20, Suppose a man had many great debts, and several poor friends, and he seeks to one of them, Good sir be bound for me, Alas saith he, all my estate will not reach or extend to satisfie half of what thou owest; Then hee goes to another; Sir be you pleased to engage your self, Alas saith he, I am so poor that the Creditor will not take my word; Even thus it is when a man will run to something in himself, to justifie him before God; Alas saith holiness, I am not able enough, and saith good works, God may finde reason enough to discard us; Therefore saith Faith, To Christ, To Christ, None but Christ.

SECT. II

Secondly, All that can justifie and save a man, is onely to be found in Christ, as in the meritorious cause; Ergo the only way to be saved, is

to believe in Jesus Christ. Hence is Christ called, Heb. 2:10. The Captain of our salvation, Heb. 5:9. The Author of eternal salvation.

There be two things, which if a man had, he should be saved, one is the forgiveness of his sins. Ergo saith David Ps. 32:1. Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, ver. 2. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.

Another is the possession of a most compleat righteousness, by which he might stand and appear perfectly just before the judgement seat of God; so that if divine justice should look on it, with the exactest eye, yet it were every way unspotted and full. Now these two are to be found only in Christ, and by him,

First, Remission of sins. It is the purchase of his blood onely, and therefore often in Scripture assigned thereto. Thou canst not with all thy tears wipe off (meritoriously) the least of thy sinnes, nor with all thy grace, buy out the pardon of thy present failings. All Remission is by blood, by the only blood of Christ.

Secondly, the righteousness which justifies and saves us, is onely in Christ; He is made righteousness to us, 1 Cor. 1:30. and Rom. 5:19. As by one mans disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous; See ver. 21. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

I know that this Point of imputed righteousness, is the great quarrel 'twixt us and the Church of Rome, I shall therefore reserve the handling of it to the Uses, where I may more fitly clear our doctrine.

Now put things together, Whatsoever will save us, is in Christ, And faith is the onely grace to conjoyn us with Christ, and therefore, To believe in Jesus Christ is the onely way to be saved.

SECT. III

Thirdly, Salvation is by grace onely, Eph. 2:5; Rom. 11:6. And it is a free gift, Rom. 5:15. The free gift, the grace of God, and the gift of grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many, and v. 16, the free gift is of many offences to justification, and v. 18, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. Now if it be so, then here's room for beleeving; For Faith brings nothing of its own, but receives all as gift from God. It is the receiving grace, Lord give me thy Son, Lord give me the pardon of my sins, Lord give me a righteousness, Lord give me eternal life, all these things are gifts, and faith onely receives these gifts, Ergo.

SECT. IV

Fourthly, Salvation is only conferred in such a way, whereby God only may have the glory of it. Though God doth bestow great matters on us for our good, yet all the end of them is for his own glory. To commend the riches of his grace and mercy, Eph. 2:7, 8. so v, 9. Not of Works, lest any man should boast; (that is) he should vaunt, and say, I have got heaven by my own merits, I have my wages for my labour, and my happiness for my penny.

Now the way of beleeving is the only way of acknowledging a God, and of emptying of our proud imaginations; whatsoever faith hath, it hath taken the same out of a gracious hand; All is almes which comes to faith, and it will confess, I have nothing, and am nothing, but what I have received; and what I expect, I expect it for his sake who promiseth it, not for my sake who receives it, and thus faith puts all the glory on God.

SECT. V

Fifthly, neither would our salvation be sure, nor our comfort sure, if we were to be saved any other way than by believing in Jesus Christ.

1 Salvation would not be sure, because, First, our happiness would be no more sure, now being in our own hands, out of Christs, than was Adams, left to himself.

Secondly, we could never be sure of salvation by any thing against which God might take just exception.

2 No sure comfort, because conscience troubled with the sense of sin, could never be pacified with imperfections and sins. That which will not satisfie God, can never pacifie conscience. But saith the Apostle, Rom. 5:1. Being justified by faith, wee have peace with God: Faith findes one who was delivered for our offences, who pacified God to the utmost, who was without spot, whose righteousness is full, imputed to us, accepted for us, and so hereupon doth graciously quiet and still the heart.

We must distinguish 'twixt the root & fountain, and ground of our comfort, and between the testimonies of our interest in the root of our comfort; only Jesus Christ is the ground of a Christians comfort, and therefore saith Paul, God forbid that I should rejoyce in any thing, but in the cross of Christ. If at any time we behold holiness, or any part of it in our hearts, wee take comfort in it, not as the ground, but as in the testimony, because it doth manifest our interest in him, who is our comfort, our peace, our joy, our salvation, our all in all.

Thus much for the Explication and Confirmation of this great assertion, viz. That to beleve in Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. Now I descend to the useful Application of all to our selves.

CHAP. VIII

The preaching and hearing of the Gospel of singular use

The first Use shall be for Information, which consists in many profitable conseq[ue]nties or inferences, which will flow from this truth. If believing in the Lord Jesus Christ be the only way to be saved, Then first, hence it will follow;

That the preaching the Gospel is worthy the while, it is of necessary and singular consequence. Peruse that place, Rom. 1:16. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, verse 17. for there is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith. The Apostle presents two arguments of his honourable estimation, and confident preaching of the Gospel.

1 One is, that it is the power of God to salvation (that is) it is the instrument which God useth, and into which hee doth imprint a power to save men: It is called the power of God to salvation, not onely in respect of revelation, because it doth manifest and declare the sole means of reconciliation 'twixt God and man, but also in respect of operation and efficacy, because it doth communicate and produce that faith in Jesus Christ by which we are saved.

2 Another is, that it comprehends the righteousness of God, Which faith onely doth take: By the righteousness of God, he understands that righteousness whereby a man is justified in the sight of God, and it is called the righteousness of God, because God is the Authour, and giver of it, it is wrought and given by God in Jesus Christ; and also because it is approved, and of force with God at his Tribunal and judgement seat. See another place, Ephes. 1:13. In whom yee also trusted after that yee heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; He in the precedent verses doth enumerate many singular and heavenly blessings, amongst which Christ was one, and he doth

in this verse express the order and manner how they come to be interested in him, viz. by trusting, or believing, and they come to that trusting and believing by the Gospel, which hee stiles a word of truth, and a message of salvation.

Tell mee seriously, is not salvation the great scope and aim of your most choice and sober thoughts? and can any attain that but by Christ? and can you have Christ without faith?

How preciously dear (then) unto you should the Ministry of the Gospel be, which is the instrument of God, to produce that faith, which lays hold on that Christ, by whom onely wee are saved! Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, so the Apostle, Rom. 10:17. and John 6:45. Every man that hath heard, and learned of the Father, commeth to mee.

Hee is an enemy to his own salvation, who slights the preaching of the Gospel; and hee is an enemy to the salvation of others, who labours to oppress and extinguish it: for if salvation be by faith in Christ, and that faith depends on the Gospel, Then,

For our parts, let us bless God for his Gospel. Let us for ever honour and respect the message of the Gospel, yea, let us heartily embrace the Doctrine, and power of the Gospel: Let the feet of them which bring the glad tydings of salvation, be acceptable unto us, for as much as salvation, and Christ, and faith, are all of them annexed unto the Gospel.

2 Then hence it will follow, that a meer hearing of Christ and his doctrine will not save, if beleeving be the only way.

There are divers sorts of hearing.

One with Incogitancy, when perhaps the Ear is open, but the minde is asleep, and heeds not that precious object revealed.

Another with Reluctancy, when the ear is open, and the mind attentive, but the heart striving against the truth and goodness of the word.

Another with Conformity, when the ear hears, and the understanding yields, and the heart embraceth. Now it is this latter kinde of hearing, which brings to salvation. That hearing which consists onely in the delivery of the message, which brings something from God to us, this will not save; but such an hearing as brings back something from us to God, which is accompanied with beleeving, which turns home the soul to the acceptance and embracing of Jesus Christ, this is the only hearing to save our souls. A motion made and tendred doth not conclude a match, but a motion consented unto and embraced.

3 If beleeving in Jesus Christ be the only way of life, then Jesus Christ should be the main scope and mark of all our preaching and studying, 1 Cor. 2:2. I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. It was the main theam and subject upon which that blessed Apostle did spend himself. Look as it is with a Physician, that though hee doth sometimes lance, and sometimes make very sick, and sometimes restrain to strictness of diet, and sometime binde and trouble the patient, and sometimes relieve him with precious cordials; though these actions are different among themselves, yet they do concenter in one end, which is health and life: So whether Ministers preach the knowledge of sinne, or whether they strive to make men sensible of sinne, or whether they let flie the arrows of Gods threatnings upon the conscience of sinners, or whether they touch on the mercy-Seat; all the end and scope is, or should be, to bring men to Christ, to make Christ more glorious in the eyes of sinners, and to incline their hearts to accept and embrace him.

Christ may be preached two ways.

Either Explicitly, when he in his person, or offices, or benefits, is the onely matter which is handled and published.

Or Virtually, when he is the end of that matter which is delivered. One of these ways, Christ is still to be preached; Do I meet with a broken and afflicted spirit, groaning under the load of sinful Nature and life, panting after the Prince of life and peace, willing to yield up it self to all the conditions of God in Christ? Here now I am to lift up Christ on his Cross, to spread his arms, to shew unto that broken Spirit, the very heart blood of Jesus Christ poured out for the remission of sinnes, to be a propitiatory Sacrifice for his soul. Do I meet with an obstinate and proud spirit, which dares to defie justice, and presumptuously to arraign mercy? Here I open the indignation of God against sinne, of purpose to awaken the conscience, to cast down the high and lofty imaginations, and for no other end but this? That such a person being now come to the sense of his misery, may fitly be directed, and seasonably encouraged to the sight and fruition of his remedy in Christ.

CHAP. IX

Justification onely in Jesus Christ

Fourthly, If that believing in Jesus Christ bee the onely way to be saved, then this informs us where to finde our justification, viz. onely in Jesus Christ; For there only is the righteousness which can satisfie Justice, and in his blood only is remission of sins.

Now, because this is a fundamental point 'twixt us and the Papists, and it is the great bottom of comfort to a beleiving soul; give mee therefore leave to improve the remainder of the time in a brief and distinct explication of it: Where

First, of the word and title (Justification.)

Secondly, of the nature and definition of it: together with some Arguments to evince, that it is onely by and for Christ; and some Answers to the choicest Objections.

SECT. I

For the word (justification) it hath a double acceptation amongst Writers.

1 One Intrinsical, and so it signifies to make a man just by an act of infusion (that is) by the implantation of sanctified or holy qualities.

2 Another Forinsecal, and so it signifies to repute or pronounce a man just by an act of jurisdiction, (that is) a judiciary sentence to pronounce him righteous, and free from guilt and condemnation.

And thus is it (for ought I can learn) altogether used and sensed in the Scriptures, which speak of our justification before God, (viz.) for such an action of God, whereby after the manner of a Judge he absolveth and acquitteth an accused person, Rom. 8:33. who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? it is God that justifieth, verse 34. Who is hee that condemneth? where you have a manifest Antithesis, or opposition 'twixt justification and condemnation; now as condemnation is an action of the Judge, a sentence of his pronouncing the person guilty and obnoxious, so justification (being contrary to it) must import an action or sentence acquitting and absolving. Yea, and again, as condemnation most improperly and abusively must bee interpreted, if wee expound it to be a making of a man so, and so sinful by infusion; so is justification unrightly conceited, when men make it to be a making of a person just by infusion of holiness.

It is observed, that in this kind of justification, viz. which is judicial; There are four persons as it were.

First, the Agent. One who begins the suit, accuseth, layeth such and such things to the charge of another, the Apostle said it, Rom. 8:33.

Who shall lay any thing to the charge? &c.

Secondly, the Patient, the person accused and charged with default, and offence, and guilt.

Thirdly, the Advocate, who endeavours to vindicate the party so charged, from the accusation, either by declaring the innocency of the person, or impleading satisfaction.

Fourthly, the Judge, who in justification of that person, gives sentence for the person accused, according to the valid plea of the Advocate, and so absolveth him. It is thus in the point of our justification, there is Satan accusing, and something else. There is man accused of sin and guilt; there is Christ interposing and pleading as an Advocate, by his blood and righteousness; and there is God as a Judge, for Christs sake acquitting, and absolving, and pronouncing righteous, and accepting to everlasting life. So then, the proper and punctual acception of the word justification, is not according to infusion, but according to absolution and pronounciation: It is not physical, as when a man is made whole, but it is judicial, as when a man is cleared at the bar.

Hee that justifieth the wicked, and hee that condemneth the just, they are both an abomination to the Lord, Prov. 17:15. There is the word again. Not I trust to be expounded by way of infusion (that is) he who makes a wicked man a good man, by impression of righteousness, is an abomination to God, but it is to be expounded by way of judiciary sentence (that is) hee who pronounceth of a wicked man in the Court of Justice, as if he were just, and reposes him as so, and accepts him as so, this man is an abomination to the Lord. Now, take one distinction, and then I will to the nature of Justification.

There is a two-fold Justification.

One of the cause, and this is a particular kinde of acquittance, touching such and such things which are laid to a person, perhaps

sometimes very unjustly.

Secondly, another of the person, when he is throughly purged and absolved; now in this respect wee speak of justification, which I think for the nature of it may be thus defined.

SECT. II

Justification of a sinner, it is a gracious and just action of God, whereby he imputing the righteousness of Christ to a believing sinner, absolveth or acquitteth him from his sins, and accepteth of him as righteous in Christ, and as an heir of eternal life.

There are divers things considerable in this description.

First, Justification (immediately) belongs to God, it is his action. It is God that justifieth, saith the Apostle, Rom. 8:33. And who can forgive sins but God only? Luk. 5:21. We well distinguish 'twixt officia and beneficia, 'twixt duties and 'twixt blessings: duties belong to us, but blessings belong to God: It is God who is offended, and therefore condemnation and absolution belong to him, to the Judge, not to any other; hence saith the Apostle, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, 2 Cor. 5:19. not imputing their sin. You do well to distinguish of the causes of our Justification. There is first the prime cause, the Author, and this is God the Father, who gave his only begotten Son for us, and set him forth to be a propitiation for sinne, through faith in his blood, that all who do beleve in him should be justified, Rom. 3:25. And who is the Judge absolving all that believe, and pronouncing them just in Christ.

Secondly, The meritorious cause, so the Son of God our Mediator, is said to justifie us, both as our surety, in paying our debt, and laying down the full price of our redemption, Isa. 53:11. thereby affording unto us the matter and merit of our justification; and as our Intercessor and Advocate, pleading effectually for us, that his merits may be imputed to us. Hence is it, Isa. 53:11. My righteous servant shall justifie many. God the Father justifies as a Judge by way of

prime authority, and God the Son justifies as a Mediator. The Son justifies as a surety, paying our debt, and giving satisfaction to the Father for us to the utmost, and the Father justifieth us as a Creditor, fully accepting of that price and satisfaction.

Thirdly, The applying cause, and thus the Holy Ghost may be said to justifie, in as much as hee conjoyns Christ and the soul (by faith) together, whence ariseth a participation of the righteousness of Christ, and the pardon of sin by him. Once more distinguish of justification, it may be taken two ways, either Actively, as a judiciary sentence, absolving, acquitting, &c. and so wee say, God justifieth; Or Passively, as a thing apprehended and rested on, and so wee say, that Faith justifieth; not as if faith did acquit, but as it takes and receiveth the acquittance; not as if faith did impute a righteousness, but because it receiveth and resteth on the righteousness of Christ, by God imputed to us: now when wee say, that Justification is an Action of God, it is meet for you to understand somewhat of the kinde of this action; For the actions of God are of different sorts.

Some which are produced within us, and make a real alteration and change in the soul of man; thus sanctification is an action of God, (that is) such an action of God as is altering the inward frame, and qualities of the soul, of unholy, making them holy; of unbelieving, making them believing; of hard, making them soft; of earthly, making them heavenly, &c.

Others are wrought for us, but not in us; and though they import a change of the condition, and state of the person, yet properly, and formally, they imprint no change in the inward disposition; And thus Justification is an action of God, not an action changing the inward frame of the heart, but an action changing the great estimation of the person; as when one of a bond-man is made free, this alters the state, but not the nature of the person; when a guilty person is pardoned by his Prince, this alters not his nature, but it doth alter his condition; hee is now in the state of life, who before was in the state of death. So is it in Justification, it is such an action, which alters the state, (that

is) the man who is in the state of wrath and condemnation, being justified, is now acquitted, and so passed into the state of life and salvation.

A man who before was guilty of sin and damnation, the same man (remaining a sinner in himself, and in himself worthy of damnation) is in his justification absolved from the guilt of sinne, and accepted as righteous in Christ, and is passed into the state of salvation. Wee deny not but the blood and the water goes together, (that is) whom God justifieth by the blood of Christ, him also hee sanctifieth, and washeth by the Spirit of Christ, but the action of the blood is one thing, and the action of the water is another thing. The light and heat in the fire go together, yet the action of light is not the action of heat: So here, The action of the blood is a justifying action, and this is without us, yet for us, and of us; The action of the water is a sanctifying action, and this is for us, and in us too.

SECT. III

The person justified, is a believing sinner: the Apostle is clear, Rom. 4:5. To him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. There is great dispute, which is first, of Faith or Justification; to me now it seems a fruitless trouble to molest ourselves with priorities in this kinde, I conceive wee may distinguish 'twixt the purchase of our Justification, which was long ago in the blood of Christ. Hee was a Lamb slain long since for to merit the remission of sinnes, neither doth hee now begin his merit, who hath heretofore performed it.

Secondly, 'twixt the imputation of that purchase. It is true, whiles I am an unbelieving person, my justification is already as a purchase, but untill I beleeve, God imputes it not unto mee. My meaning is this, there is a righteousness of Christ, which hath deserved pardon of sin before ever I believe, nay, before ever I was born, but God imputes this over to mee when I believe, as soon as ever I take Christ by faith, God imputes the righteousness of Christ unto mee, and will

not impute my sinnes unto mee: And Scripture is open enough for this, wee reading so constantly in the New-Testament for men to come in and believe that they may have remission of sins in the blood of Christ, and through him also eternal life.

I only propound this scruple, whether faith be to deal with the person of Christ first, or with his benefits first; Surely we say with his person, and then with his portion; well then, if faith deals with the person of Christ immediately, then it appears that a man must believe, and so be justified, for as much as justification is an action of God imputing the righteousness of Christ, and not imputing sin, which are the general benefits (as I may speak so) of Christ. It is not handsom to conceive that God should first pardon mee, and then I believe, or that I should have the righteousness of Christ before I have Christ himself, which must be if there be a priority of justification before Faith. For my part, I conjecture that they are simultaneous things (that is) they go both together. If yet any men will be acute, let them be so: The perill is little on either side, so that I have faith, and then am justified, or so that I am justified, and then have faith, or so that I have faith to be justified, wil in the substance & event, redound all to one

SECT. IV

Remission of sins belongs to justification, (that is) when God justifieth the person, hee doth absolve or forgive him his sins.

There be in sin two things.

One is, the stain, pollution, defilement of it, and corrupt inclination; with this Justification deals not, but Sanctification.

Another is, the guilt and punishment; and with this doth justification deal. Suppose you saw a sick thief, there are two sorts of persons to deal with him; a Physician, because hee is sick, and a Judge because hee is a thief; If the Judge acquit or pardon him, this clears him as a thief and guilty person; if the Physician heal and cure him, this

respects him as a sick and diseased person; the case is our own. Now I say, that God in justification remits or absolves the sinner. Two things are here considerable, First, quid; secondly, quousque.

First, quid, what this remission is; I answer, it is an exempting of the sinner from guilt redounding to punishment: If any man sin, guilt cleaves universally to the sin, but then in Justification it shall not be imputed, it shall be taken away in respect of efficacy and redundancy. Suppose a person arraigned, and cast for a murder, and the King graciously steps in and pardons him; though this pardon makes not the murder formally to be no murder, and though it makes not the murder now meritoriously deadly, yet it doth hold off the efficacy of that guilt, that now it shall not prove death to this person, because hee pardons him. So in Justification, where God pardons the sinner, hee doth not make sin to be no sin, or that there should not be any natural condemnability in sin, but that it shall not effectually redound to the death and damnation and hell of the person, whom hee hath acquitted for Christ.

Secondly quousque, How far remission of sins extends in justification. There is a two-fold remission.

One particular, which is circumscribed to some particular facts, and is ordinary in the Courts of humane Princes, who limit and restrain their discharges of offenders.

Another universal, which reacheth to the whole estate of guilt; now this I take as sure, that whomsoever God justifieth, hee will forgive unto him all his sins. All his sins before conversion, and all his sins after conversion: But whether this forgiving of all, be once for all, simul & semel, as they speak, I am not able to speak my thoughts fully.

It is true, I confess, and embrace that opinion, that justification is not a divided act, it is not repeated over, and over, and over, but it is one act onely; but whether it be one transient act, (as if all were dashed

out with a pen) or whether it be one continued act, is very disputable. The Scripture leans much to this latter, and therefore describes God to be a God forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sinnes, importing a course of pardoning, and not a momentary act.

Again, it is hard to utter how God doth forgive a sinner before he hath sinned, which must be, if pardon for all sins be a momentary act.

Yet I had rather captivate my judgement, than occasion dispute; only remember two things.

First, no doubt but the justified person shall have every sin pardoned; not some onely, but all.

Secondly, justification doth not admit degrees; though it may a continuance: The righteousness and merit of Christ which is our justification, is not more or less, but is at all times one and most perfect.

SECT. V

The righteousness of Jesus Christ is that by which only we are justified.

The righteousness of Christ is the matter of our justification; not the essential righteousness of his God-head, but the righteousness of Christ, as Mediator both God and man, which was either,

The habitual holiness of his person, in the absence of all sin, and in the rich and plentiful presence of all holy and requisite qualities.

Or the actual holiness of his life and death by obedience; the one perfectly fulfilling the commands, and by the passive obedience of the other, voluntarily suffering the penalty, and commination of the Law for transgressions. Now all this righteousness is imputed to us in justification. For

First, no other righteousness can justify.

Secondly, as Christ was made sin for us, so we are made righteousness by him, viz. only by imputation.

The Papists call upon us for a righteousness in Justification; they will bring one forth of their hearts and good works, Menstruous cloaths, saith the Scripture, but wee produce a righteousness most full, perfect, every way exact, not in us, but in Christ, yet imputed to us by God.

How clear is the Scripture for us? 2 Cor. 5:21. Hee hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might bee made the righteousness of God in him, Jer. 23:6. The Lord our righteousness, 1 Cor. 1:30. Christ Jesus is made unto us of God, &c. righteousness. How often doth the Apostle peculiarly interest imputed righteousness, handling the doctrine of Justification? Rom. 4. But the Apostle clears all, Rom. 5:19. As by one mans disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous. *Adæ peccatum imputabitur mihi, & Christi justitia non pertinebit ad me?* said Bernard.

Object. But Christs righteousness is His, and how can it present us righteous before God? It is none of ours.

Sol. First, it is his in respect of *Inhæsi*on, but it is ours in respect of *Imputation*; His personally, ours meritoriously.

Secondly, we may be considered two ways, either absolutely and alone, or else as conjoyned with Christ: and thus being by faith made one with Christ, he makes over his righteousness unto us, upon which God looks as ours, in the matter of justification.

Ob. But if Christs righteousness becomes ours so by imputation, that wee may truly be accounted and accepted of as righteous, then by the like reason, because redemption is made ours, wee may likewise bee reputed true Redeemers and Saviours.

Sol. This is one of the arrows which Bellarmine draws out of his quiver against the imputation of Christs righteousness, but it is of no force.

For hee is to bee termed a Redeemer and Saviour, not who doth receive, and take the redemption and salvation procured by another, but who brings redemption and salvation; we are by the Redemption of Christ truly said to be redeemed, though not our Redeemers, and so by the imputation of Christs righteousness, are we truly accounted righteous persons.

Ob. Again, if the righteousness of Christ be so imputed to us in Justification, that for it we are accounted perfectly righteous, as if it were our own most perfect and intrinsecal; then why may not we be accounted as righteous as Christ? yea, and having Christs righteousness, why may we not be the Saviours of men? since that is the righteousness which doth save all that are saved.

Sol. I answer,

To compare the same righteousness with the same, is illogical and gross, for it is one and the same righteousness which is inherent in Christ, and imputed to the believing soul.

Secondly, the righteousness of Christ is not imputed to any particular beleever, according to the whole latitude of its efficacy, but according to the particular exigence of the person; It is not imputed to Paul as the general price of redemption for all, but as the price by which his soul in particular is redeemed.

These things being dispatched, there is a difference amongst some Divines, about that righteousness which is imputed, some holding the passive onely, others the active and passive.

Sol. The latter seems most solid; Reasons these,

First, there is no Justification without the fulfilling the whole Law, but now to the fulfilling of the Law, (since the fall of Adam) two things are required, one is, perfect and personal conformity to the Law, in answering that active condition of it, Do this and live. Another is, a plenary satisfaction to the sentence of the Law, by bearing the penalty therein denounced in regard of sins already committed.

Secondly, Again, faith doth not abrogate the Law, but establish it, but if it should teach justification without Christs fulfilling of the Law, it should abrogate the Law.

SECT. VI

The last thing which I should have inserted before, is this, That the justification of a sinner is a gracious and just action. It is a gracious action, (that is) the gracious love and favour of God was the cause of it; It was his own free grace and favour that gave Christ his Son to be our righteousness, and it is his free grace to give us faith to beleeve on his Son, and when we do beleeve, it is his Grace which imputeth unto us the righteousness of Christ.

Secondly, it is just and righteous action, Rom. 3:25, 26. That he might be just, and the Justifier of him that beleeveth in Jesus. Gods justice is such, that hee will forgive no man his sins, for which he is not perfectly satisfied, neither will he accept of any as righteous, who hath not a personal righteousness, but having received a perfect satisfaction, hee will acquit the sinner beleeving, for he is just and righteous, and his Justice will not make a second demand: yet here is the graciousness of God which will admit of the satisfaction, and of the righteousness of another for us.

CHAP. X

The difficulty of beleeving in Jesus Christ

A Second Use from this great assertion, shall be to put our selves to a Tryal and Examination. If to beleeve in Jesus Christ our Lord be the only way to be saved, then it doth much concern us to search our selves, whether we do beleeve indeed in Jesus Christ.

There are three things which I will premise as so many grounds, why wee should put our selves upon this enquiry, and then I will give unto you the discoveries themselves. The premises are these.

First, the difficulty of beleeving in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, the facility of error and mistake about beleeving.

Thirdly, the bitter danger, and sure misery of not beleeving in Jesus Christ.

1 The difficulty of beleeving is increased by the singularity of so strange and wonderful a goodness. It is so great and so unparallel'd, that a man can hardly believe it to be true. To have an estate in Christ, in God, freely, all at once; How can this be? The depth of guilt. I am an enemy, God is just; I have run into such high forfeitures, so unnecessarily lost my self, provoked God so often, and the threatnings are planted against sinners, there is no hope, no probability, (if a small debt, &c.)

But for the difficulty of it, that it is not so easie a thing to beleeve in Christ Jesus, this shall appear in divers particulars.

First, there is no, natural principle of justifying faith now in man. An act, or motion, or quality, which hath a rise and bottom within the subject, may spring forth with some ease: A stone having a natural propension and impetus to descend, if you do but quit the hand of it, it will down; but now to make a mighty stone to mount the hill, to get

up into the air, there being no natural aptness to this, it is a hard and difficult attempt.

Ob. 'Tis true, that a man hath an understanding and will, but the Mystery of Jesus Christ is a riddle to the natural understanding.

Sol. The faculties naturally considered, have no elevation to this object, unless the Lord by his Almighty power begets and works faith in the soul. The soul thinks not on him, neither can it draw it self to him. Like the needle, until it be touched, it will not start up towards the pole; so unless the Lord doth touch our hearts by his blessed Spirit, we shall never close with Christ.

So then, this is one thing to shew the difficulty of believing, the habit of it is out of our power, out of our sphear; it cannot be produced by any strength of nature, but by the sole arm of God. Hence that of the Prophet, Isa. 53:1. unto whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? who hath beleev'd our report? The testimony of the Gospel concerning Christ will not be believed, unless the Lord doth reveal his own Arm, (that is) until he doth put forth his own Almighty strength.

There is a natural principle of infidelity and unbelief its every mans heart. If the paper were fair, if there were no precedent blurs and blots, then it were not so hard to imprint some legible Characters; Or if the wax were soft, and the iron heated, now it were easie to engrave what kinde of armes the Artificer pleaseth; But when the wax and the iron are hard and cold, now the impression is difficult, because the resistance is strong; if there were in our hearts any obediential principles, which could before hand temper the minde, and frame the will, then when God offers Christ, little ado would serve the turn; But our hearts naturally bend the other way; there is in us a natural unaptness, nay, an enmity to beleev'e. Enmity to the habit and nature of faith, blindness, error, pride, stubbornness, disobedience in our hearts. We have such slow and untoward hearts, so armed with all sorts of corrupt reasonings, so consulting with sense and rational evidences, so ready on every in evidence, to mistrust, doubt,

question, gainsay, that all Arguments will not perswade us that God will give us Christ, and pardon our sinnes. You know that when the Lord Jesus was personally on earth, and did preach himself, and in that manner, that none spake with that Authority as he, and confirmed the truth of his Divinity and Mediatorship by Scripture and miracles, yet very few believed, (historically) that he was the Christ, that hee was the Son of God. Take me now a person who is sensible of his sinful guilt; Tell him of the need he hath of a Saviour, he will grant it; represent unto him the sufferings, the excellency, the tenderness of the Lord Jesus, that he is the Mediator, the propitiation for sins, that Remission of sins is in his blood, both intensively, for the great degrees and aggravations of sinne, and extensively, for the severall kindes of sin. Tell him, that the Lord Jesus came to seek such a lost person as he, that he came to loose such a captive as he, that he came to binde up such a broken spirit as he is, that hee came to ease and refresh such a burdened and laden soul; Yea, and answer objection after objection, doubt after doubt, fear after fear, that the person cannot put by the arguments, why he should beleeve, nor urge and re-inforce his reasons, why he should hold off from closing with Christ, and putting his soul on him, yet this we finde, he cannot (when all is said) he cannot believe. Unbelief doth throw up so many mists, and so many fears, and is (many times) so unreasonable, that yet it will hold off the heart. Neither the goodness of God, nor the truths of God, nor the mercies of God, nor the freeness of them, nor the person of Christ, nor the merits of Christ, nor the tenderness of Christ, nor the gracious offer, invitation, command, threatning of Christ, will make the heart to come in unto him.

3 There is a natural opposition in the Heart against Christ, and therefore it is hard to believe on him. The opposition is manifold.

First, to his Person; the Lord Jesus Christ is an holy Person, and none can take him in truth, but must take him so, to be holy as he is holy. He is the holy one of God, and he is called the holy Childe Jesus, and an holy, undefiled, High Priest, separated from sinners.

Now the heart (naturally) is in love with sin, and Christ tells us that this very thing is a cause why men believe not: See John 3:19. This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light. Christ comes thus to a man, I am he who will save thy soul if thou wilt take mee; but then know, that I am an holy person; if thou wilt have mee, thou must let go thy sinnes; Now this breaks off the match, hinders the bargain, this goes to the heart: A man naturally will as soon part with his life, as with the sin of his love.

Secondly, to his condition: There is a double condition of Christ, one is Triumphant, another is Militant; Gloria in excelsis, that is, the triumphant condition; Tribulationes in Terris, that is, the militant condition; the Crown of Glory, that is the triumphant condition; the Crown of Thorns, that is the militant condition.

Now the heart naturally is unsuffering: It is a terrour to it to speak of afflictions, sorrows, reproaches, losses; Wee are willing to enjoy the world, to taste of pleasures, to handle profits, to rest in ease, to walk at liberty, to rejoyce with our friends, to be spread abroad with high estimations. The young man, when Christ bade him sell all that he had, and give it to the poor, (It was præceptum experimantale) he goes away sorrowful.

Thirdly, to the Scepter and Government of Christ. Wee will not have this man to reign over us, say they; and you read in Psalm 2. How they did consult to break his bands asunder. The Scepter of Christ is Heavenly, and his Laws are Spiritual and his Waies are Righteous and straight, they lay injunctions on the inward man, as well as on the outward conversation, and binde the thoughts, and the intentions, and affections. Now what do you mean, to pin up a Spirit which would have elbow room? what, would you have a licentious heart, and a turning and winding conscience, to bee precis'd, and narrowed, and restrained, and so every way straightened? You must give it leave to break the Sabbath, to improve its gains dishonestly, to swear now and then, and to comply, &c.

Fourthly, to the Righteousness of Christ. O what a do had that blessed Apostle with the Romans, with the Galatians, with others, to break them off from Justification by Works; And to fasten upon their hearts the Justification by Faith?

Wee are apt to stand upon our selves, and to look for the matter of our acceptance and acquittance in our selves on man; Hee thinks that his good meaning shall make him speed; Another thinks that his doing no body any harm will let him into Heaven, or else God help us; Another stands on his devout Sacrifices; Another on his charitable bounties; Yea, and those who should know better in the Doctrine of Justification, how extreamly do they cling to their inherent Graces? Much a do, before they can bee made to cast their Crowns to the earth, and to give the glory onely to Christ who is worthy. What pains is God forced to take to break us off from our selves? Wee are so proud, and so unwilling to bee beholding to Gods free grace, and Christ, that God is fain to break our heart to pieces, and to split our ship into shivers, that we might onely cleave to Christ.

He must imprint the holy and mighty vigour of the Law on our consciences, to shew us our utter impotency, and sensibly acquaint us with our marvelous imperfections in graces, and interruptions in duties, and excursions of daily sinnings, and all to fetch us entirely, to cast our safeties onely on the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

CHAP. XI

The facility of error and mistake about believing

Secondly, as it is hard to believe, so it is easie to mistake, and delude our selves in the matter of believing: Four things make it to be so.

1 One is the various kindes of faith.

2 Another is the consimilitude of one of the extreames of faith.

3 The easiness of both. And,

4 The aptness in our hearts to bee satisfied with these.

First, there are divers kindes of faith: As the Apostle spake of bodies, all bodies are not the same bodies, but there are bodies Cælestial, and bodies Terrestrial; so I say of Faith, all faith (I speak of habitual faith) is not the same kinde of faith, we read of a Faith which the Devils have, and we read of a Faith which the Hypocrites have, and we read of a Faith which even Christs enemies (whom he did not dare to trust) had, and we read of a Precious Faith, a Faith of Gods Elect, a justifying and saving Faith. Divines ordinarily distinguish of faith.

There is an Historical faith, which is a crediting the word relating, but not an embracing of it promising; it is like the passing through a Garden, and observing, and smelling, but not a flower is gathered; so in Historical faith, the eye of the understanding goes over the Word of God, and hath some apprehensions, and general grants, and intellectual submissions, that God doth not lye, but what he saith is true. Nevertheless, there is not that quality of Justifying faith in this, which makes the heart to close with the goodness of truth, and to embrace Christ.

2 There is a wonderful faith, a faith of miracles, to remove mountains, to raise the dead, which had some special and immediate promise, and yet it was a gift bestowed on those who had no faith to save themselves: Many who have cast out devils, may at the last day be cast among the devils: Lord, Lord, have not we Propheesied in thy

Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils? And yet Christ bid them depart, Non novi vos.

3 There is a temporary faith: which hath in it some great apprehensions of the truths of God, yea, and reverent assents; yea, and some delightful contentations in the same; yea, and some fruitful expressions; and with all these, a singular degree of profession, even to a zealous forwardness, and notoriousness; so that a man may be in the eye of others like a tall Ship, and yet there is a Leak in the bottom, which on the sudden sinks all.

This temporary faith, though in many respects it handles the same object with saving faith, it is tampering much about Christ and the promises, yet it is intrinsically, and extremely different from it.

It doth not differ from it in respect of eminency or degrees, nor in respect of existence or duration onely (for the one is a living Spring, and the other is a decaying Flood,) but in respect of formal nature also: The temporary faith doth not indeed bring all the heart, and settle it on Christ.

4 There is this justifying and saving faith which bestows the whole heart on Christ, and takes Christ unfeignedly to be Lord and Saviour. Now where there are so many sorts, it is not a great difficulty, nor an impossibility to mistake, error is manifold, (said the Philosopher) but the truth is single, and there is but one line to hit the mark, but many to miss it.

Nay, secondly, there is a great consimilitude of one of the extreames of faith, with faith it self, viz. credulity. It is strange (yet ordinary) that a man should make a heaven of his own, and a God of his own, and a Christ of his own, and a faith of his own & a way to heaven of his own. Presumption is a work much of an idle fancy, and a graceless heart; like a thief, very apt to finger the Kings coyn, but without a warrant. But to the thing; Is there knowledge in faith? why? presumption pretends to that: is there confidence in faith? what

more bold than presumption? is there any sweet assurance in faith? why? presumption never doubted, but could believe ever since a man was born: is there any joy in faith? why? presumption is as jocond and careless, as if there were no heaven to be got, no sin to be bewailed, nor course to be reformed.

3 Lastly, these are easie, and we are apt to content our selves with these, instead of a true beleiving in Jesus Christ. To get a little seeming knowledge, to carry Religion upon the lip, and Christ on the tongue, to be bold upon Gods mercy, and Christs death, and with all those, to have a heart glued to the world, folded up in the love of sin, resolved against al hazards, to shift off all profession rather than to endure any storm, what is this so great a task? But to have a minde taught of God, and to have an understanding bowed with the strength of Divine light, and inward change to the obedience of truth, and to have a will sweetly renewed, and with an holy trembling, humbly receiving Christ in his person, and offices, and bestowing the whole soul and body on him again; here the work sticks.

CHAP. XII

The sure and dangerous misery of unbelief

The last thing which may stir us to try our selves is the consideration of that amazing danger, and unspeakable misery, to which the soul is assuredly obnoxious in case of unbelief.

Obj. Why, will you say, What danger if we believe not?

I answer, there are three special dangers.

First, all thy sinnes stand upon record against thee, like so many sad debts, which thou hast run thy self into, from thy conception to this very day. They are all written with the pen of a Diamond: there is no blotting out of a mans sins, but by the blood of Christ, and the unbeliever hath not his portion in that blood, and therefore there are all thy sinnes uncanceled, thy sinnes of nature, and all thy sinnes of life; such a sin, and such a sin, then and there, and again, committed, &c. O how great is the volume of them, the number of them cannot be numbred, and the guilt of them cannot be conceived; if one sin bindes thee over to hell, Good God! To what flames of vengeance and horrible degrees and intensions of misery and wrath do all thy sins oblige thee?

Yea, and as Solomon said in another case, Prov. 9:12. If thou scornest, thou alone shall bear it: so I say here, if thou remain an unbeliever, thou alone must answer for all thy sins. Whatsoever the wrathful displeasure of God is; whatsoever the horrors of conscience are; whatsoever the gnawings of that worm are; whatsoever the heat of hell flames are; whatsoever the doleful separation from God is; whatsoever curse the Law implies for sin, that maist thou expect, who wilt not believe in Christ. O! if that wrath was so hot, when it (obliquely as it were) fell on Christ (where it had no unholy and self-guilty quality to admix with it self) that hee sweat drops of blood, and cryed out, My God, &c. How wilt thou with any patience, ease, possible quietness, sustein the extream wrath of the Almighty Judge, who are vile, and filthy, and hast a conscience with all thy torments, to gall and vex thee with the stings of misery, guilts, and self-accusations? tell mee how art thou able, what canst thou say, how canst thou bear up before the Lord, if he should arise, it he should terribly arise to judge the nations? He is the Holy God and Just, and is True and Great in power. What satisfaction canst thou bring, where are thine oblations, or with what wilt thou reconcile thy self unto the Lord? Whereby canst thou either make thy former sins to be no sins, or perswade the Lord to be propitious to thee without Christ?

3 Nay, verily, he will judge thee as an unrighteous person, for if thou hast not Christ, what righteousness hast thou? there is no hope for thee to be acquitted, nay, not hope to be saved, nay, thou art sure to be damned.

Mark 16:15. Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.

John 3:18. He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the onely begotten Son of God. 36. He that beleeveth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that beleeveth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Rev. 2:8. The fearful and unbelieving are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

Obj. But you will say, Why? This is strange! Why such extream misery for not believing? what sin is it?

Sol. It is one of the greatest sins of the world, not to believe, (that is) not to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Because,

It is a sin against the greatest love to the world, Joh. 3:16. God so loved the world, that he gave, &c. Rom. 5:8. But God commendeth his love towards us, that whiles we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

God shewed the greatness of his love, to bestow his Son, and Christ shewed the greatness of his love, to dye for us. Greater love (said Christ) can no man shew, than to lay down his life &c. Now for the Lord to finde out a way of Salvation, and in love to our souls to offer this Son of his unto us, and to beseech us to be reconciled, and then for us (like them who were envited to the supper) wee cannot come, wee will not come. O this, &c.

2 It is a sin for which there can be no remedy, for as much as it is a sin against the onely remedy of a sinful soul. The sentence of the Law may be repealed by the Gospel, but not è contra. There is no plaister for the soul but the blood of Christ, which yet unbelief will not take and receive.

3 It is a sin which (as much as in it lies) makes void and vain all the Covenant of Grace, turning all the goodness of it into nothing, and all the truths of it into lyes, and makes the blood of Christ to be shed in vain. He that believeth not makes God a lyar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son, 1 John. 5:10.

4 It is a sin which directly murders the soul: because it doth wilfully hold it off from Christ, who would upon believing, pardon, and justifie, and save.

All these things being premised, let us now descend towards the trial or evidences of true faith in Christ, where I beseech you observe,

CHAP. XIII

Rules for the discovery of faith

First, some Rules of Direction, for the manner of evidence and testifying of faith, that you may neither be deceived by presumption, nor perplexed by error and doubting.

Secondly, some lively instantes of true faith, as the word of God doth clearly represent them.

The Rules of discovery and finding out faith, which are these.

SECT. I

There are some things without which faith cannot be in the heart, and yet they do not necessarily and infallibly conclude that a man hath faith.

They do well distinguish in the Schools 'twixt an Antecedent, and a Cause; a Cause is such a thing as is before the effect, and which being put, the effect also is put, one will not go without the other; But an Antecedent is that which must go before another thing; yet it is not necessary that if it be, that the other things should follow. The rising of the Sun is a cause of day, and therefore this will always hold, If the Sun bee up, it is Day; But this now, Learning, is (or should be) an Antecedent to preferment, it should go before it, yet it is not an infallible truth, that every one who gains learning, should enjoy preferment: Thus is it in the nature of faith, There are some Antecedents, there are some things which must of necessity go before faith, yet they alone do not formally and assuredly conclude that a man hath faith; as for instance.

A man cannot beleieve in Christ, hee cannot receive Jesus Christ with all his heart, he hath some historical evidence of Christ, he must have some knowledge of Christ, what he is, and what he hath done, or else hee cannot take him to be his Lord and Saviour; yet this knowledge doth not infallibly conclude justifying and saving faith; for as much as the Devils and Hypocrites may see much of Christ, they may have a high degree of intellectual apprehension.

Again, a man cannot by faith take Christ to be his Lord and Saviour, unless he hath some sensibleness of his sinful condition, our heart will not look towards Christ, it cannot conceive of his excellencies, nor of his own necessity, until wee feel our sinfulness, and lostness, and vileness; The whole neither need, nor look for a Physician, yet a person may bee sensible of his sinful condition; he may not onely by the light of natural conscience apprehend some broader and stirring enormities, but hee may by a smart and quick light, let in by the Ministry of the Word, discern heaps of wickedness in his life and heart, for which his conscience may sting him with wonderfully bitter

accusations; and yet such a person (possibly) may not rise from trouble to faith, as is evident in Cain and Judas. So then remember this, that in the searchings and trials for faith, you do not conclude the presence of the habit from the common antecedents of faith, for as much as faith is but a contingent consequent of them, sometimes it doth follow, sometimes it doth not. As in Marriage, sometimes it doth follow the motion which is made, and sometimes it doth not; so the espousing of our souls to Christ by faith, sometimes it doth follow knowledge, sometimes it doth not; sometimes it doth follow the preaching of the Word, and yet sometimes it doth not; for all have heard, yet who hath beleevd? said the Apostle, Rom. 10. sometimes it doth follow the motions, and inward excitations of the Spirit, and sometimes it doth not.

2 There are some things which faith onely doth produce, yet because it doth not produce them always, a man therefore must not negatively conclude from the absence of them, the absence of faith.

You know that holy and spiritual joy, it is the sole fruit of faith, therefore saith the Apostle, 1 Pet. 1:8. Beleeving, yee rejoyce with joy unspeakable and glorious. There is nothing which can present to the heart of a Christian, such full cause of joy, as faith, such a God, such a Christ, such a love, such a blood, such a mercy, such happiness, such unmixt, and proper, and suitable good. There is a carnal joy, which sparkles from the cup of pleasure; and there is a glistening joy, which the rays of gold may produce; and there is a beastly joy, which the fulfilling of sinful lusts may send forth; and there is a flashing and transient joy, which the pride of Hypocrites may dart out; but sound, and weighty, and holy, and pure, and spiritual joy, which is a well-grounded, and not to be repented, affecting of the heart, that comes onely from faith: Yet it comes from faith as a separable effect; look as trouble and sorrow is a Contingent antecedent, so even in actu imperato, true joy is a separable fruit of faith. Though the branches and green leaves do sprout out of the living root onely, yet this colour doth not appear at all times; Though the blade comes onely from the grains cast into the earth, yet you cannot always

observe the blade. Though the flesh and natural complexion flows only from health, yet there may be sad occasions which though they do not extinguish health, may yet soul and blubber the complexion. So even the beleiving person may sometimes have a tear in his eye, an handkerchief in his hand, a sigh in his breast, and yet have faith in his heart. He may sit down in ashes, and feed on tears, as David did, and for all this he may be a true beleever: He is not always able to see the causes of his joy, nor to break through the contrarities to his faith, nor to remove the quashings of his comforts. Therefore when you are to try your selves about your faith, do not make a negative inference from separable evidences.

3 There are some things which faith onely doth produce, not as essential properties, but as magnificent testimonies.

The moral Philosophers distinguish 'twixt the effects and acts of liberality, as it is absolutely considered, and as it is eminently considered, being raised to magnificence. To give a farthing according to the rules and circumstances of morality, even this is an act of liberality; but to build a Colledge, this is now an act of liberality grown into the greatness of magnificence. So is it in the matter of faith, there are some fruits of faith which come from it, absolutely considered according to the vital constitution of it: And there bee other fruits which come from it eminently considered; faith is come to an height, to a strength, when it sends them forth. Though a childe cannot bear a burden of an hundred pound weight, yet hee can desire the breast and suck; the bearing of such a burden belongs to strength, and yet the very sucking shews that he hath life. Though a Christian be not able in all respects, at all times, with all moderation and silence, to pass presently through every heavy occurrence, which shews strength of faith, yet his heart may most affectionately cling about Christ, which shews the truth of faith.

Assurance is a fruit of an eminent faith, and so is a more habitual stedfastness of quiet submission, and confidence in all estates and conditions, and so is that maintenance of the heart upon Gods

promises in the times of strong contrarieties. Now as Divines should warily open their lips, so should you wisely distinguish of the evidences of a true faith, some being (if I may so term them) essential, and others being eminent, some there are which discover the truth, others which testify the strength of faith: It is one thing to shew unto you the properties of a man, another thing to shew unto you the properties of a strong man. Many a poor Christian hath been deeply gravell'd by others, and extreemly afflicted by his own spirit for want of this distinction of the properties of faith. Because he reads, and hath heard what admirable and singular fruits, and effects, faith hath sent out, as Assurance, and full assurance, and with these some glorious acts of self-denial, as in Abraham and his unstaggering embracing of a promise, against which both reason and sense, and nature might have disputed and urged. O say they, wee have no faith, Abrahams faith wrought full assurance, removed all staggerings, our hearts are still doubting, we can hardly be perswaded, we reel and stagger like the waves, now on the shore, and then instantly off; now we believe, anon wee let go our hold, and doubt: And hence they uncomfortably conclude against their own souls, the utter absence of faith from the defect of some particular and eminent expressions of faith, not absolutely as faith, but of faith as strong and exceedingly ripened: we must not conclude negatively, from the degrees to the habit.

As if one should conclude that he hath no silver in his purse, because another hath a bank of many thousands; or that hee hath no legs to go, because he is not so swift as Asahel; or that the Sparrow flies not, because hee cannot mount up to the Sun with the Eagle; or that a childe is no man, because hee cannot express the acts of a strong man.

4 There are and will be many inward contrarieties to the intrinsical acts and fruits of faith, notwithstanding faith bee truly in the soul, and works there. Faith, though it hath the preheminance of other graces in respect of its office, being the only Ambassador (as it were) of the soul to Christ, yet it hath no priviledge above them in respect

of the subject, (that is) in respect of the act and workings of it there; but look as every other Grace hath some or other particular corruption opposite to its particular nature, and its particular actings; So even faith it self hath infidelity, and unbelief opposing it, both in the quality, and in the several exercisings or actings of it. There may be flame of the smoak, and a hand with shaking, and a tree trembling, and a faith of doubting.

Yea, if any grace hath the hardness of a more general and strong opposition, then faith is it, it being a grace of general help and use to fetch in more grace, and more strength against all sinne. Now in our trials for faith, it will be with us as with the Artificer, in his search for the little rays of gold; It is true, he shall finde much dross here and there, and yet if he can finde a very little piece of gold, (though amidst an heap of dross) he will say, this is gold, and will preciously esteem of it, and lay it up. So when we are searching our hearts by the light of Gods Word for true faith, without all doubt we shall meet with many doubtings, much unbelief, yet if we can finde any one degree of true faith (which is more precious than gold) we may not cast it away, because it is found amongst its contraries, but we must cherish and embrace it, because the touchstone of the Word hath approved it to be a precious faith. For (and mark this) we are not able to give you any evidences of faith, or any other grace, by way of abstraction, but by way of existence, (that is) not what may discover faith in a notional, and the most singularly conceivable profession of it; but such testimonies you have to discover faith, as faith is now abiding in sinful persons, who though they may have true faith, yet as long as they live in earth, will have many things in them contrary to faith.

There is a double contrariety to faith.

One is natural, and this more or less will be in the soul of any beleiving person, till you can utterly raise the heart, and eject sinne by the alteration of glory: So long as wee have flesh and spirit, there

will be a conflicting 'twixt faith and unbelief. As there was a mixture of joy and sorrow at the erecting of the Temple.

Another is approved, when a man neither doth, nor will believe, he neither doth accept of Christ, nor will he have Christ to reign over him, and he likes his unbelieving condition, this is a fearful estate: But though the contraries to faith do arise, yet if they be not approved, yet if they be resisted, we must not conclude that we have no faith, because of the opposition, but rather assure our selves that we have it, because of the resistance of that opposition. We must not conclude against faith, because of opposition inward or outward.

This inequality of acts conclude not an absence of the habit of faith. Distinguish of,

1 Radical habits.

2 Actual exercisings, which are, sometimes more, sometimes less, sometimes clear, sometimes interrupted, sometimes the soul is free, sometimes oppressed, and violently carried by temptation to mis-judge the condition.

The censure of our faith must not be allowed, as is given in the time of our temptation and passion, &c. I said in my haste, Psal. 116.

Obj. But you will say, we grant all this; But how may a man know that his faith in Jesus Christ is a true and lively faith?

Sol. I answer.

SECT. II

First, A true love of Christ is an infallible and essential evidence of a true faith in Christ.

There are four things which will clear this, as a lively testimony of true faith, If we can prove,

First, that love is not separated from faith.

Secondly, that there is no believer in any degrees of faith, but he hath a love of Christ.

Thirdly, that there is no time, or circumstance, into which the believing soul is cast, but still he loves Christ.

Fourthly, that no unbelieving heart can, and doth love Christ; I say, if we can prove these four conclusions, then it will be most evident and certain, that the love of Christ is an infallible Argument or Testimony of a true faith in Christ: Thus then,

1 Love is not separated from faith; If you peruse the Scripture, you shall finde them go hand in hand. Gal. 5:6. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love, (that is) Christ is not mine, because I am a Jew; nor is he mine, because I am a Gentile; but he is mine, because I am a Beleever; and if my Faith in him be true, it will express it self by love, 1 Thes. 1:3. Your work of faith, and labour of love in our Lord Jesus Christ; Faith and love are like a warm hand; faith is the hand, and love is the warmth in it; faith cannot be the hand to take Christ, but love will be the warmth to heat our affections unto Christ. 1 Tim. 1:14. The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Faith and love are like the husband and the wife, and faith and love are like the mother and the daughter; See 2 Tim. 1:13. and Phil. 5. And indeed it stands with unanswerable reason, that faith and love cannot be divided; for as much as faith in Christ,

First, represents the absolute and effectual cause of love to Christ. It doth see such a measure of goodness and mercy from God through Christ, and such a height, and depth, and breadth of love to us in Christ, and such an excellency of holy perfection, and amiableness in Christ, which draws the soul with strong affections of love to Christ again.

Secondly, if faith might be without love, then a person in Christ might be Anathema-maranatha, for as much as he who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, is, &c. but it is a monstrous wickedness to conceive that a believer in Christ should be so.

Secondly, there is no believer in any degree of faith, but he hath a love of Christ. The weak Christian as well as the strong, the plant as well as the cedar. The Father of the childe who cryed out, I believe, help my unbelief; as well as Abraham the father of the Faithful. Though one Christian may produce some testimonies which another cannot: though every one cannot say with Paul, I am fully perswaded, yet every one can say with Peter, when Christ demanded of him, Simon Son of Jonas, lovest thou mee? Hee said unto him, Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.

Yea, thirdly, whatsoever straights the believing soul is cast into, when it is in death, in flames for Christ, yet it can love Christ, when it is under the crowd of temptations, when it is in the bitter days of desertion. When the Skirmish of reasonings do prevail upon the soul so highly and strongly, that the heart is ready to conclude against it self, that God looks not on it, Christ will not bee mine, yet even then however, I love the Lord Jesus Christ, I love him, though I can see no sensible testimony of love from him, my heart is still towards him, he is my Center and Loadstone.

Fourthly, No meerly unbelieving person can love the Lord Jesus Christ. For, what is love? Love (you know) it is the settling and transplating of the heart: It is such an affection as knits the soul to Christ, but it is impossible that this should be whiles the heart hath no faith. So then love of Christ is an infallible testimony of faith in Christ.

Obj. But you will say, this is strange, that love of Christ should be so lively, and so distinguishing a testimony of true faith, why doth not many a man, yea, every man profess that he loves Christ?

Sol. Beloved; What men profess is one thing, and what they affect and love may be another thing; the semblance of love is a thing distinct from the sincere affection of love. If your love be true and sincere, never question the matter any further, assuredly thy faith is right.

Obj. But this is the doubt, this is it we question as much as the former, whether we truly love Christ or no?

Sol. A word to it, and so an end of that trial. If the love be true which is to Christ, Then

1 It will bestow our hearts on Christ onely: Nothing is too good for him whom wee heartily love: in true love the heart is in him who is loved, and not in him who loves. *Anima est ubi amat, non ubi animat*, and which way the heart goes, all shall go that way.

2 It pitches on the person of Christ: Love is base, if it be 'twixt person and estate, but pure love is 'twixt person and person: I confess that a wicked man, an unbelieving person may have a tooth at the portion of Christ, he may marvelously desire the merits of Christ, pardon of sin, exemption from hell, but faith is it which draws out such a love, as makes the soul to admire if, and to cleave unto the person of Christ.

3 It is sincere and conjugal: it is not an adulterous love, which is divided among several Paramours; O no; True love of Christ knows no husband but Christ, and no Lord but Christ, he is the covering of our eyes.

SECT. III

A Second trial of our true faith in Christ Jesus, is this, inward change and sanctity of the heart, is an infallible testimony of a living faith. Divines distinguish of a common faith, and of a special faith, and according to their nature so are their effects; A common faith may elevate the minde to singular apprehensions, notable expressions,

outward conformities, in matters either not difficult or dangerous; But special faith hath a distinguishing operation, it works that which no false or pretensive faith can; What's that? This is it, it doth change the heart, and is ever a companion with inward holiness.

There be three things which I will shew you about this.

First, that true faith doth produce a change; there is a twofold change, I One of the condition, which is, when a man once in the state of death, is now passed over to the state of life, once in the terms of condemnation, is now translated to the state of absolution, and this change faith finds for us in Jesus Christ, the imputation of whole righteousness in Justification, changeth the state, so that our guilty debts are taken off, and we are reconciled.

Secondly, which is of the person, and this change is the alteration of a mans nature, for faith is not onely a justifying grace, but it is also a sanctifying grace: Hence these phrases, Acts 15:9. purifying their hearts by faith, Acts 26:18. that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ. As the blood of Christ is a pure blood as well as a precious blood, and as it is a cleaning blood as well as an expiating blood; so faith is a grace, not onely to acquit, but also to purge and renew; It is not only an entitling grace, (that is) that grace which doth interest us into Christ and his benefits, but it is also a conforming grace, (that is) such a grace as works into us the virtues and holy qualities of Christ. And therefore you read that it doth engraffe us into the similitude of his death, Rom. 8. and into the fellowship of his sufferings and resurrection, Phil. 3:10.

Secondly, observe, that every believer hath a charged and a holy heart, 2 Cor. 5:17. If any man be in Christ (and you know that it is faith which unites to Christ, and plants us into him) he is a new creature, (that is) that man is altered in his inward frame, in his faculties, in his inclinations, all over.

1 There is a change, either in the cessation of some particular actions, which an unbeliever may attain; and there is a change in the newness of nature, when the soul is turned, and biassed, and enclined quite another way. I confess, the Apostle doth not say, if any man be in Christ he is a strong creature, yet he saith, he is a new creature; for though every believer hath not that maturity, and ripeness, and strength, yet he hath a newness in his nature, an holy change wrought in him throughout. Look as the first Adam derived guilt and corruption to his posterity, so the second Adam derives pardon and holiness, therefore he is called a quickning spirit, 1 Cor. 15. It is not 'twixt Christ and believers, as 'twixt a root and a dead limb, which hangs on, but hath no life, nor sap: Christ hath really no such members in his body, he is not like Nebuchadnezzars image, whose head is of gold, and the feet of clay; for a man to boast much of his head, of Christ, of gold, and yet he to remain a piece of clay, he to have a nature utterly heterogeneous unto Christ, this man deceives himself. For every plant, every graft that is inserted into Christ, hath the alikeness of his nature. Hence those who in John 1:12. are stiled Believers, they are said in the next ver. 13. to be born of the Will of God; Now as in the natural birth there is a new form, so in the heavenly there is a supernatural and holy frame of grace ingenerated.

Thirdly, No man hath a changed nature but a Believer. Why? Because no man hath grace but from Christ, and none have Christ but Believers: Again, it is impossible for a man to be lovely in the eyes of God without faith, but if any man might have a changed and sanctified heart, and yet want faith, then one might be lovely in Gods eyes wanting faith, for as much as God loves and delights in an holy heart. So then this is most evident, that if faith goes not without a change, and if every Believer hath a change, and no unbeliever hath it, I say, this will follow, Therefore if a man can finde a change of his heart, he then hath the truth of faith.

Now then enquire; is there virtue gone from Christ to make thy dark minde seeing, thy stubborn judgement yielding, and prizing, thy proud heart humbling, thy filthy heart cleansing, thy hard heart

relenting and mourning, thy carnal affections to be heavenly, thy sinful soul to be holy; be confident of this that it is sound faith? Though there be yet remainders of corruption, yet if the inclination of the soul be changed by grace, doubt it not, thou hast faith: But for such as talk of a faith which stands in opposition to holiness, and please themselves in a graceless faith, in such a faith as hath no society or company of graces in the soul; O far be such a faith from any one of us. An unholy believer is as proper a phrase as an holy Devil. Presumption is a most confident work, but it is a very loose quality, 1 Cor. 6:9. Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind. Ver. 10. Nor theeves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdome of God. Ver. 11. And such were some of you; but you are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Do not abuse thy soul with a conceit of faith and justification, if thou hast no change of heart by sanctification.

SECT. IV

Thirdly, a third trial of true faith in Christ Jesus is this, It will stoop to Christ, as well as rise to him; It enters the soul into a new service, it takes Christ and him onely to be its Lord. You read that there was a Marriage feast, to which some did come, and there was the Kings son sent out to rule and reign, but few yielded unto him. Many men will come to Christ to finde a feast, but few come to Christ to bear his Scepter; they would come under the safe-guard of his blood, who fly the Authority and dominion of his sword; they like Christ the Priest, but not Christ the Lord.

I will briefly shew you two things to clear this trial.

First, no unbeliever will accept of Christ to be his Lord only; because,

1 His heart hath another Lord; It hath set up some sinne or other, or some part of the world or other, to which it gives service as to his

Lord. He is our Lord to whom we give service, and his servants we are whom we do obey; Now the unbelieving heart either serves the world, or obeys sinne in the lusts thereof. Let the commands of sinne and Christ come into an ordinary and usual competition; let the commands of profit, or pleasure, and Christ come into competition: Now you shall see, that the unbelieving heart will go after its Lord, it will not hearken to Christ, it prefers sin before him, it will easily adventure Christs displeasure to fulfill its own lusts.

2 Again, his heart cannot choose Christ, it cannot like him for a Lord, Why? because the dominion of Christ is holy and heavenly, and directly opposite to the sordid principles and affections, and ways of an unbelieving heart: It is a burden, yea, a very vexation to such a heart, to hear but the report of the holy Laws of Christ, and of their power and authority to oblige the inward man, and the outward conversation.

Psal. 3:2. They take counsel against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, ver. 3. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

'Tis true, whether wicked men will stoop or no, Christ is a Lord in respect of designation, but he is not their Lord in respect of approbation; They will not have this man to rule over them.

Secondly, Every believer admits of Christ to be his Lord; as Thomas said, My Lord, and My God, John 20:28. see, &c. and so

1 Faith sets up the Scepter of Christ, and sweetly frames the soul to a willing subjection.

2 Again, faith takes whole Christ, and therefore Christ is the only King and Lord to faith.

3 Again, faith knows that the whole person is Christs purchase, his blood hath bought us, and so passed us into the entire dominion of

Christ; ye are bought with a price, ye are not your own, said the Apostle, 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

Now then try your selves in this, who is your Lord? why brethren? Thus it is, faith gives the propriety, and title, and disposition of our hearts and ways to Christ.

Obj. 'Tis true, before we were called to faith in Christ, we were disobedient, we served divers lusts, we set up our sins and the world.

Sol. But now being made partakers of rich mercy and grace in Christ, we shall surely rebell against other Lords but Christ, (that is) against all other Lords whose commands are contrary to Jesus Christ; Our hearts are his, and our affections his, and our strength his, and our service and submission his.

Obj. I deny not but sinne will bee stirring, even in a beleiving heart, it will be assaulting, it will now and then usurp upon the soul, and vex, and captivate it.

Sol. But the rebellion of a sinful nature is one thing, and the dominion of it is another thing: Sin will stir as an enemy where Christ doth reign as a Lord: But it is one thing for thee to be a combatant with sinne, another thing for thee to be a servant of sin. Not who assaults me, but whom I love and serve, he is my Lord.

When the heart goes off from Christ to the approbation, and love, and habitual obedience of sin; now sin is thy Lord: But if by faith thou hast sworn fealty to Christ, then though all temptations begirt thee, though the insolencies of corrupt nature break in upon thee, to captivate, or to alienate thy heart from service to Christ, yet amidst all oppressions, yea, under all the knocks and buffetings, and interruptions by sin, the heart cries out, I acknowledge no Lord but Christ, him I would obey, him I honour, I love, his I am, and I yet hate those sins which yet I cannot conquer.

SECT. V

Fourthly, a fourth trial of true faith is this, It makes the heart humble and lowly. Every unbelieving heart is proud, and hath high imaginations, and stands upon its own bottom; It hath no sound experience, either of God or of it self. But true faith casts a man quite out of himself, it sees no ground of confidence and excellency from any thing in our selves.

Faith hath a double aspect, 1 One is upon us, 2 Another is upon God and Christ: When faith looks down upon us, alas it findes no matter of boasting in the world, for either it findes sins, which should abase our hearts, or else imperfections, which should curb our pride, or wants, which should shew unto us our indigence and dependence. The Evil which it findes may confound us, and the good which it findes may make us ashamed; not only because it is so short, and defective in what we ought to have, but also because we have not answered the giving of that good with just thanks, or wee have not improved that good to the advantage as we might have done.

When faith looks upward to God and Christ, there it sees all the causes of all our mercy, and of all our happiness; have we pardon of sins? why, saith faith? the cause of this is in Gods love. Have we righteousness? why, saith faith, the cause of this is in Christs merits. Have we any gifts, any acceptance, any remembrance from heaven? why, saith faith, the cause of this is onely in Christs blood. All that I have is given me, and the cause of all that giving, is utterly out of my self; so that the soul sits down now, and says, O Lord, in my self I am nothing; nay, of my self worse than nothing; but what I am, I am that by thy grace. All I have is thine, my bread, my health, my life, my body, my soul, all thine; If any love, if any mercy, if any Christ, if any grace, if any comfort, if any strength, if any stedfastness, if any performances, if a good work, if a good word, if a good affection, if a good thought, why, all is thine, thou only art the cause; I am less than the least of thy mercies, and what is thy servant that thou shouldest look on such a one as I am? Thou madest me, and thou boughtest me, and thou calledst me, and thou justifiest me, and thou savest me. Though faith makes thy condition high, yet it makes thy

person low: Thou shouldest by faith, be not high minded, but fear, Rom. 11:20. why, not high minded? because standing by faith: Because this standing of faith is not of our selves, but in God, but in Christ; Faith is the foot of the soul, but heaven, the grace of heaven, the strength of heaven is the ground upon which the foot doth stand.

SECT. VI

Fifthly, true faith is fruitful, James 2:18. I will shew thee my faith by my works, ver. 21. Was not our Father Abraham justified by works? ver. 22. Seest thou how faith wrought by his works, and by works was faith made perfect? The Apostle in that Chapter speaks of a double faith.

One was a counterfeit faith, a shadow as it were, which had the looks, but not the substance; it was a dead faith, which hath the limbs, but not the soul and life.

But how did it appear that this faith was dead? did it not speak many good words? Yes, saith Saint James, It gave good words, & pretereanihil, no good works; It could say to the poor, be ye cloathed, and be ye warm, but gave nothing to cloathe or to feed, why? saith he, this mans faith it vain (that is) he hath not the true quality of faith, and it will stand him in no stead.

Another was a lively and justifying faith, It had in it the true nature and property of faith, but how did that appear?

The Apostle answers, by Works. You know that there is a great difference 'twixt these two, viz. the justifying of a mans person before God, and the justifying of a mans faith before the world: That which justifies my person before God, is onely Faith in Jesus Christ, and that which Justifies (as one particular) my faith before men, not to bee a dead, but a living faith, is the acting of good works. Hence that of Paul, Tit. 3:8. This is a faithful saying, and those things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have beleaved in God might be careful to maintain good works, these things are good and

profitable unto men. Right is the speech of Saint Augustine, sequuntur justificatum, though non precedunt justificandum. As in a clock, the finger makes not the clock to go, but the clock it, and yet the motion of the finger without, shews whether the clock goes within.

So although works do not cause or infuse justifying faith, nor yet cause our Justification, yet they do clearly manifest whether wee have such a faith as doth indeed justifie, or not.

Object. You will say, the work of faith is to look up, and to come and to deal with God onely; and therefore to breathe out good works which respect men, seems not to bee any testimony of Faith.

Sol. I answer.

1 The Apostle there expressly distinguisheth the lively and the dead faith by works (as if hee had said) it is so.

2 There is (if you will let mee distinguish so) as it were a double act of faith.

One is proper and personal, and this is circumscribed to that Heavenly employment of receiving or presenting in and through Christ.

Another is Grateful, and this is extended to the sending forth of good works. Not as if it were a work of supererogation; for faith findes the doing of good works under many commands, and also the rewards of them under many promises; but because faith sees also a sweet and reasonable equity, that if God be good to mee in Christ, I should be good to some for Christs sake. And verily, as the workless person doth not now own Christ by faith, so hereafter Christ will not own him by mercy, depart from mee.

Obj. But yet you will reply, good works cannot be a sure testimony of faith, because many evil men may perform them, and some beleivers

have not where-withall to do them.

Sol. I answer.

1 Good works may be so stiled, either, First, materially' because they are such things as may do good. Secondly' formally, being sealed with all the circumstances which are required to make them good, both for Spiritual composition, and Divine acceptation. Now though wicked men may perform works good materially, yet formally they do not, for to make a work formally good, there must be the concurrence of all circumstances, the person must have a good heart, and a good ground, and a good end, and a good Christ, &?

2 Though every beleever cannot actually do every good work, yet some good works or other he can do: though he cannot give mony, yet he can give prayer, &c. Now think on this ye who have riches and wealth, and profess faith on Christ, and yet scarce a person, a poor distressed person can bless God for your fruitful faith; nay, the very doing of a small good work, sometimes doth even try all the faith in the soul; a man doth many times believe he shall surely want, and impoverish his estate if he should be rich in good works.

SECT. VII

Sixthly, true faith doth desire and endeavour after increase: Help my unbelief, said the unbelieving father, O Lord increase our faith, said the Disciples. I pray observe a few things

1 That true faith begins in weakness. Like a childe at the first, very tender; or like the light, at the first very broken. Presumption being a work of fancy, and born with its strength and perfection, it is fully assured and utterly confident at first. But Jacobs ladder hath many steps.

2 That though it hath weakness, yet it hath life: as the spark of fire, though it be little, yet it is hot, and though the childe bee weak, yet it can suck; even the weakest Faith in Christ will bee much about

Christ, it will be weeping at his grave, or washing of his feet, or looking on his person.

3 There are yet many degrees wanting to faith, either thou canst not be perswaded, or not fully perswaded, or not constantly perswaded.

4 If the faith be true and living, it will bend after a rising; and that,

First, in respect of its acts, of receiving, trusting, perswading.

Secondly, in respect of its object, It would yet apprehend more, and feel more of the communion and virtues of Christ. All the preaching in the world doth not increase a false and presumptuous faith, nor doth the administration of the Sacraments adde thereto. But the living, they grow, and he must have more faith, who hath any; Paul would apprehend even as he is apprehended. The soul which hath true faith, would have yet more victorious yieldings, more stedfast embracings, more confident restings, &c. like the childe which sucks and thrives.

SECT. VIII

Seventhly, true faith in Christ, and a mournful heart for sin go together, Zach. 12:10. They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his onely son.

There are two things which faith will fetch up in the soul, one is love to Christ, another is sorrow for sin. There may be a terror without faith, the conscience may be crackt and wounded, but till faith comes, there is no sorrow, the soul is not altered nor melted; that which melts the soul is kindness and mercy, and that which sees them is faith; thou doest cast an eye of Faith on Christ, that eye will have some tears for forced sinning against Christ. You shall finde in Scripture, that true beleivers are characterized by this, that they be mourners in Sion, and they return with weepings and supplications, and they pour out waters before the Lord: and unbelieving persons are described by hearts of Adamant, of rocks, of stone, by hardned,

by unsensible, by irrelenting hearts; The text saith, that when Christ looked on Peter, he went out and wept bitterly; there is a piercing virtue in a gracious look from Christ. The soul which hath been long humbling it self, and much in seeking for mercy, and a good look from heaven, It is (when any gracious manifestation of favour darts down) even resolved into tears: never did the childe weep more soberly upon his reconciliation to his loving father, than the beleeving Christian doth mourn in sober sadness, when his faith gets to see God reconciled to him in Christ, he reads his pardon with tears of joy.

There are two parts of sorrow.

One is essential, which consists in a strong displeasure of the will against the soul, for sinning against a good God.

Another is contingent, which consists in those dreary tears flowing into the eyes; now this is contingent; for when the heart is many times filled with tears, like Davids bottle, yet it may so fall out, that the eyes may be silent in such expressions, &c.

CHAP. XIV

Singular comfort for all true Beleevers

If to beleeve in Jesus Christ bee the onely way to be saved, then here is singular comfort to all true beleevers. What Solomon spake of wisdom, that I say of faith, her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Shee is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that reteineth her. If this bee a happy thing to have the Lord to bee our God, (and David judged it to be a superlative happiness) If this be a blessed thing not to be offended at Christ; O how sweetly and greatly blessed is the condition of a beleeving soul, which hath God to be its God, Christ to be its husband, and heaven, to be its portion? Faith and Christ, why? they are the ring and the diamond; they are the way and the life; the soul cannot have such a prize as Christ, nor such a hand as faith; such a match as Christ, nor such a grace to contract it as faith. Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, said Simeon: He may cheerfully lay down his body in the dust, who hath by faith given up his soul to Christ.

But to descend to some distinct particulars of comfort to the soul which beleeves truly in the Lord Jesus Christ, observe.

SECT. I

First, this is one comfort in the Text, that they are in the way to heaven. Naturally we are out of our way as soon as we enter into the world, as soon as they be born they go aside, said David, and, the way of peace they have not known; and nothing sets us in the right way but faith, for Christ is the way, and it is faith which findes a Christ: It was not Philips natural eye, but his spiritual faith, which spied the Messias: Christ is the way to heaven, and faith is the way to Christ Salvation, it is the great object of the greatest desire, and indeed I

know no more excellently desirable thing than God, in a glorious union, with whom is the perfection of our salvation. Now if thou bee a true beleever, thou art in the way to salvation.

1 Not in a by way, in a false way, but in a true and direct way: If God doth skill the way to heaven, if he hath laid out to sinners the right way, then believing is it, Eph. 2:8. By grace you are saved through faith, Heb. 10:39. We are not of them who draw back into perdition, but of them that beleeve to the saving of the soul.

2 Not in an uncertain, but firm way; It's an infallible way of salvation: Heaven is the assured mansion for thy soul, if thy heart be the true lodging of faith, 1 Pet. 1:4. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

Obj. True, that may not fade away, but we may fall away; that may remain, but we may be lost.

Sol. No saith the Apostle, but as that is reserved for you, so you shall be preserved unto that; as mercy and truth will keep your portion sure, so truth and power shall keep your persons sure. Ver. 5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, therefore he addes a word more, ver. 9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Now is not this a comfort to a man, that he is in the true and sure way to heaven? Every man is in a journey, in a way; wicked men have their ways, but the end of them is bitterness, and hell after all their jollities and pleasures, yet their ways are the paths of death. But the beleiving soul is in the way of life, and therefore he is said already to have eternal life, and to be saved. O what is this? I am going to my God, to my Father, to my inheritance.

SECT. II

Secondly, here is another comfort to true beleivers, there is a real and blessed exchange't wixt them and Christ. As upon the conjugal knot, there is a mutual resultancy of communion: The wife partakes

of the estate of her husband, and the husband (interchangeably) of the estate of his wife: for the personal union draws with it the real union; If thou be mine, thine estate is mine: So is it in the spiritual espousing of the soul and Christ by faith, Christ partakes of our estate, and wee shall partake of his estate. Hee is ours, and all his are ours, wee are his, and therefore ours are his,

This exchange consists in these things.

1 Christ doth take our sins and debts upon himself. Look as the man who marries the woman, if he take her person, he must take her debts, and satisfaction too: So doth Christ, when he takes us to be his, he takes our sins also to be his; How to be his? not by way of infusion and infection, as if our sinful qualities were transmitted from our persons into his nature (O no, he never takes upon him our sins to make his nature sinful,) but by way of imputation, and of satisfaction. The guilt of our sins is imputed unto him as to a willing surety, who doth present himself in our stead, to make payment and satisfaction. As Paul said to Philemon concerning his servant Onesimus, If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that upon mine account. So saith Christ to the penitent and believing soul, if thou hast any guilt and debt to be answered for unto God, put them all upon my account, if thou hast wronged my Father, I will make the satisfaction to the utmost, for I was made sin for thee, 2 Cor. 5:19, 20. I poured out my soul for thy transgression; It cost me my heart blood to reconcile thee to my Father, and to slay enmity. And as Rebekah said to Jacob in another case, upon me, my son, be the curse, so saith Christ to the beleiving soul, Why? thy sinnes did expose thee unto the curse of the Law; but I was made a curse for thee, I did bear that burden my self upon the cross, and upon my shoulders were all thy griefs, and sorrows born; I was wounded for thy transgressions, and I was bruised for thy iniquities: And therefore we are said to have redemption and remission of sins in his blood, Eph. 1:7.

Now what a comfort is this to a Beleever, that Christ hath eased him of his great debts, that he hath laid down the price for him, he is his surety, and hath discharged and hath cancelled the Law of Ordinances, and hath blotted out the handwriting? God was in Christ (saith the Apostle) reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their sin unto them, mark it, not imputing their trespasses unto them; what is the not imputing of sin? but the not charging of it, the not reckoning for it: And what is it which he saith (unto them) trespasses were not imputed unto them, as it God should say, let them go, I have nothing to say unto them, my Son hath satisfied my justice fully for them. Now, saith Paul (out of David) Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sinne. Yea, he is blessed indeed; for if the Lord should single out the most able transgressour for the least moity and scruple of guilt, and arraign his conscience with a judicial and straight severity; O how the sinews of the soul would flie asunder, and eternal despair of ever satisfying so great, and pure, and infinite a justice, would swallow up the thought and imaginations? Till a man knows where to lay down his sinful burden, his soul will be miserably afflicted; but now, if a man beleeves in Jesus Christ, Christ will take off his burdens; I will answer for thee saith Christ, I will satisfie for thee. As David spake in another case, when Goliah presented himself against the Host of Israel, Let no mans heart fail because of him, thy servant will go and fight with this Phylistian. So saith Christ to the believing soul, be not dejected, do not despair, though thy sins be many and great, yet I have overcome them, I have discharged them, my Sacrifice was presented, it was sufficient, it was effectual, it was accepted for thee.

Secondly, Christ doth bestow his righteousness upon us. This is a great comfort to a sensible and understanding soul, that there is a righteousness for it, which it may safely and confidently present unto Gods justice.

These things are most true.

First, that we are by nature all of us wretched sinners, the whole world is guilty before God.

Secondly, Divine Justice hath a quarrel against every guilty soul, and will have compleat, and full, and perfect satisfaction.

Thirdly, no, not our best graces and performances are commensurate, and square payment in the eyes of pure justice: all of them as inherent in us, and acted by us, are but imperfect excellencies: No man hath so much holinesse as is required, nor doth hee so much as hee is obliged. Every particular grace, though it bee of an heavenly and divine original, yet is it like the starres twinckling, though placed in the heavens; and every duty, though it bee a motion, yet is it like that of Jacobs thigh, which was touched, and halted to his dying day. So that if God should enter into judgement with the righteous person, even the righteousnesse that is in him, would not bee safety and defence unto him. As a man that hath a precious lading, dares not to adventure it in any crackt and broken vessel, so no Christian may or can dare to adventure the safety of his soul upon the leaking vessels and bottoms of his own holinesse or services. This very smoak of doubtings which still mount up with our flames of faith, and the grosse affections which cling to the root of our most heavenly love, and part of that rock of hardnesse, is seated and complanted with the freshest spring of softnesse, and mournings, and those infinite and frequent intermissions, both of our prayers, and hearings, and readings, and any kind of dutiful doings, that we are so shufled away from our devotions, by the invasions and entertainment of strange thoughts in the times of our devotion: I say, those and infinite emaculations or spots, do so adhere and cling about, and defile our selves, and that which comes from us, that (in proceeding of pure justice) wee may cast down our selves on the ground, and beg for mercy, much rather than to stand at the barre, and plead for reward: But now here is the great stay of a beleiving soul, (which hath truly received Christ) that Christ will find a full, exact, compleat, most acceptable righteousnesse for it, in which the soul shall stand boldly before the Judgement Seat.

Rom. 3:19. By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous, 2 Cor. 5:21. Wee are made the righteousness of God in him, 1 Cor. 1:30. Yee are of him in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, &c. Jer. 23:6. In his dayes Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is the name whereby they shall call him, The Lord our righteousness.

The righteousness of Christ is therefore called the righteousness of God, Rom. 8:17. because it is it which God hath designed, and which God doth accept for us in our justification; and for, and in which hee doth acquit and pronounce us righteous. Now in this lies our comfort thus, viz.

1 That though our inherent holinesse be imperfect, yet Christs righteousness is absolute.

2 That as it is a full righteousness, and every way answerable, so it was designed by God, to be that which should justifie the beleiving sinner.

3 That God accepts of that righteousness, and will clear any who hath it.

4. That, if by faith wee have taken Christ, Christ doth assuredly bestow his righteousness on us, not by putting it into our persons, but by improving it to our good; It is, though not infused into us, yet imputed unto us, and God will through it pronounce us clear.

SECT. III

Thirdly, a third comfort to a beleever in Jesus Christ is this, That hee is in singular Covenant with God: for the Covenant is with faith in Jesus Christ, it was to Abraham and to his seed (that is) to all the faithful.

Observe a few things here.

1 The Covenant of grace (in the offer and revelation of it) is the treaty of eternal happiness betwixt God and sinners; whatsoever good a soul can desire to exempt it from misery, and to make it truly happy, there it is.

2 The Covenant of Grace, in respect of our entrance and admission into it, is a most gracious, and spiritual, and firm ingagement of God to be our God, and to perform all the good which he hath there undertaken. I will be a God unto you, I will shew mercy unto you, you shall have loving kindness, I will give you grace in all kindes, I will not fail to assist, and guide, and lead, and uphold you, I will be a father to you, a rock to you, a Sanctuary, an all-sufficiency, an exceeding great reward. So that if you need any thing, come to me, I have it for you, and doe not fear to come, for I will assuredly doe you good, I am willing to doe it, for I have promised it, and be you confident to possess, for I have obliged my self by Covenant to perform.

3 Hee that beleeves in Jesus Christ is assuredly in the Covenant: for Christ (on whom hee beleeves) is the Messenger of the Covenant, and his blood is the blood of the Covenant, and in him all the promises of the Covenant are Yea, and Amen. If thou hast given thy consent to Christ, if thou hast bestowed thy heart on him, if thou hast truly received him to be thy Lord and Saviour, undoubtedly God is become thy God, and all those ample, and rich, and congruous, and blessed undertakings in his Covenant, they are all for thee, thou art the man to whom God saith, I will surely have mercy on him, and to whom hee saith, Sin shall not have dominion over him, for hee is under grace, and to whom hee saith, I will hear him, and heal him; and guide him, and keep him. Thou mayest goe to all those Treasures of Divine promises, as to thy own garden, and take of any flower, lay hold on any promise, respecting thy particular exigence, and say, this is mine. When thou lookest down into thy self, thou mayest read many wants with wet and sad eyes, but then if thou look up to the Covenant, thou mayest by faith espy all thy supplies with a glad heart. Why? God did put thy good into the Covenant, and there thou

shalt assuredly finde it: Doest thou read of any altering grace, of any pardoning grace, of any enlarging grace, of any preventing grace, of any assisting grace, of any preserving and upholding grace, of any recovering and raising grace, of any pacifying and comforting grace? why all this is for thee, and all that God hath there undertaken is thine.

SECT. IV

Fourthly, if you do beleve in the Lord Jesus Christ, you may then with boldnesse approach the throne of grace.

Ephes. 2:18. For through him wee both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Heb. 10:21. Having an High Priest over the House of God, Ver. 22. Let us draw neer with a true heart in full assurance of faith. 1 Joh. 5:13. These things I write unto you that beleve in the Name of the Son of God. Ver. 14. And this is the confidence that wee have in him, that if wee ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

Obj. You shall finde in your heart many sinful modesties; you are afraid to be so bold with God, and whether God will do such great matters for you; yea, and there are many unbeleeving fears, our broken services shall never be accepted, and who are we that the Lord should regard our prayers?

Sol. But if a man doth truly beleve in Jesus Christ,

1 His way is open to Heaven.

2 Hee hath a friend, and not an enemy to deal with: It is thy Father to whom thou art bending the knee.

3 Hee hath a mighty Intercessor; look as Jesus Christ is the mighty Redeemer for the persons of men, so hee is the mighty intercessor for the services of men, and hee ever lives to make intercession. If thy wants be never so great, yet thy God is able to supply them; and if thy infirmities bee never so many, yet thy Intercessor is able to cover and

expiate them. Thy services (as thine) carry with them a prejudice; there was iniquity in the holy offerings, but then Aaron did bear the iniquity of them: so thy Priest, thy Christ, thy Intercessor, hee doth take off by the Application of his merits, whatsoever is amisse and offensive, and he doth ingratiate thy requests, and procures audience and acceptance for thee.

Therefore now, if thou bee a beleever, then in thy prayers come confidently to God; if thou canst finde a promise, and a Christ, and a faith, thou mayest cheerfully put up thy petitions to Heaven. What should hinder us from being confident? Is God unwilling? No, he hath engaged himself unto thee. Is God unable? Why, Hee is able to doe abundantly above all that we are able to ask or think. Doest thou fear thy own distance? Why, but thou comest to a Father, and thou comest by the bloud of a gracious, of a beloved, of a powerful Mediator and Intercessor. Hebrews 4. Having such an High Priest, we may come boldly to the throne of grace. See Heb. 10. Doest thou fear because of enmity? Christ hath slain that; or because of infirmity? Christ will cure that.

CHAP. XV

The agreement and difference of strong and weak faith

Obj. But now some may reply, These are sweet comforts to beleivers, but as the Eunuch to Philip, of whom speaks the Prophet this, of himself, or of some other? So here, why? to whom are these comforts, to all, or to some choice beleivers? are they common

comforts to every beleever, or peculiar to the eminent and strong only?

Sol. This scruple hath made way for a singular point; I will satisfie it by opening four particulars.

1 The common unity of all true faith, in respect of the habit, yet the intensive diversity, in respect of acts and degrees.

2 The proofs of a strong faith, with the instances of a weak faith in truth.

3 The concordance of faith in all fundamental Comforts.

4 The inequality of strong and weak faith in many true, yet nor essential consequences and consolations.

Concerning the first, which respects the common unity of faith in respect of the habit, and the diversity of it, in respect of the acts and degrees.

Observe these things for the unity of faith.

SECT. I

First, that all true faith, though in a comparison of faith with faith in several subjects, it may admit of several diversities & differences, yet they consent & agree in these things, viz

First, in the immediate and special cause: weak faith, as faith, comes not from one cause, and strong faith from another cause, but both the one and the other from one and the same cause, viz. the blessed Spirit of God. Not onely the flames, but the sparks of fire are kindled by that Spirit which blows where it lifts. As in the Orchard, the tree which stands strong, and the tender plant which stands trembling, both of them were at first set by one and the same hand, so the faith which is now well grown, and that faith which is as yet tender, and

full of doubtings, both of them are the peculiar fruits of Gods sanctifying Spirit.

Though this childe in the cradle cannot run and move as well as that in the field at work, yet the father begat the one as well as the other, and owns them both by virtue of one equal relation. The day of small things are not despised by God, who sees weakness in the strongest Faith, and Truth. in the weakest, and is the Parent both of this and that.

2 In the remote and singular cause. You know that Gods free grace and love is the first wheel of all singular good unto men; out of it came that great gift of Christ, and that great work of Election, from whence doth flow all the graces which sanctifie and bring to glory. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Now all faith is a drop out of this fountain, the weak faith is a fruit of that great love of God, electing us in Christ, as well as the strong, and is, though not so sensibly evident, yet as really a true testimony of our election: The reason whereof is this, not grace restrictively considered, bur grace in the whole latitude of it is the fruit of Gods election: my meaning is this, not only Graces as eminent, as raised and elevated to some more perfect quality and pitch, but grace in the whole compass of it, from the conception of it to the perfection of it; from the dawning to the full day; from the nature to the act; from the acts to the degrees; all of it in nature, in parts, in totum & solidum, all of it whether more or less, strong or weak, all is out of the same grace of Election.

It was not one love which elected him, who is therefore now strong in beleiving with Abraham, and another love which elected him, who is now weak in believing with the father of the childe; No, but it was one and the self-same love which produced this and that faith; yea, that electing love was intensively one in producing of both. It was as equally high towards this person as towards that, and was as equally causative of the faith that is weak, as of the faith which is strong, being habitually considered, and also in relation to the grace of Gods love in election.

3 In the ordinary and usual instrumental cause: the same womb of the word brought them both forth, being efficaciously assisted by that Almighty Spirit. That word which discovered misery, and impotency, and necessity to the one, did so to the other. That word which revealed the Covenant of grace and mercy in Christ to the one, did so to the other beleever also. That word which did assure the one, that if hee would come in and accept of Christ, he should be saved, did also of this assure the other. That word which did encline the heart of the one to trust upon Gods promise, and so to accept of Christ, did likewise (being quickened with the same Spirit) draw, and perswade the other.

4 In the lively nature of beleeving: look as the strong and weak man, though they do differ in the measure of power, yet they do agree in the nature of man; though they differ in respect of working, yet they agree in respect of being. And as the sick man, and the healthy man, though they vary in their temper, yet they agree in their nature; though they differ in livelyhood, yet not in life: So, though the strong and weak faith differ exceedingly in respect of particular abilities and exercises, yet there is a true nature of faith in the weakest as well as in the strongest. There is as true a knowledge of the sinful and miserable condition in our selves, and of the blessed condition in Christ, in the one as well as in the other. There is as true an assent to the word of grace, the Gospel of salvation, revealed in the one as well as in the other, I say, as true, though perhaps not equal and full. There is as true accepting and embracing of Christ, to be Lord and Saviour; the will doth as truly receive Christ offered, though perhaps there be not such a strength of adherence at the first. There is so much in the weakest faith as makes up the match 'twixt Christ and the soul; nay, there is not any thing in the strongest faith, which is an effectual ingredient to espouse the soul with Christ, but the same also is in the weakest faith. Doth strong faith take Christ? so doth the weakest; doth it acknowledge him the only Saviour? so doth the weakest; doth it embrace him as its Lord? so doth the weakest; doth it breed union? so doth the weakest; doth it make a man a member of Christ, and heir of promises? so doth the weakest.

Thus you briefly perceive the habitual unity of all true faith.

SECT. II

Secondly, now a word of the intensive diversities of faith; How faith differs from faith: I do not mean a true faith from a false, but a true faith from true faith. As one man truly living may differ from another truly living, notwithstanding they agree in the common nature of man, and life; Or to use the Apostles Simile, as one star may differ from another star in glory, though all bee in the heavens. The rounds in Jacobs ladder are not all at the top, yet are they every one of them steps to heaven; so of faith, every faith is not triumphing, yet every faith is mounting up to the Lord of life, and King of glory.

The several and particular habits of faith, though they consent in one truth of nature, yet they differ in many things.

First, in the strength of the parts and acts: As in the eyes of men, though the visive faculty be equal in all, yet vision, or the act of seeing, is diverse, one sees the colours more clearly than another.

So is it in faith, (which is the eye of the soul,) Though the nature be common, and equal, yet the act of believing is different.

There are three acts of faith, and in respect of all of them, there may be a diversity among believers.

1 Knowledge and apprehension, this is as it were the groundwork of faith; for believing is not rooted in ignorance, but in light. Now every believer hath not so full and distinct a knowledge as another. Divine revelations (which are the general objects of faith) are not clasped alike by all: No, nor yet the promises, (which are the special objects of faith) they are not so equally apprehended. There are several promises, and in them several parts, and degrees of goodness and truth; now, it is possible for some beleivers not to be acquainted with all their treasures; they have not been so long acquainted with the Word, as to know all the good which doth concern them; And that

special good which they do apprehend, one believer reacheth the large compass of it more than another: All (even in Christ) is not equally known by all, who believe in Christ. Hence it is, that age, and time, and communion, and study, and use of means, and experience, do raise the apprehension and knowledge to far more degrees and strength than at the first; and the believing soul, which at first saw things (as the man whose eyes were touched by Christ) dimly, at length riseth by degrees to a more perfect light of the same truths, and to a more full and enlarged apprehension of other truths, which he was ignorant of before.

2 Assent; even in this also may one beleever differ from another: I confess, the usual and palpable diversities of faith be most in things as good, rather than in things as true.

Nevertheless every believer, as so, assents to all revelations, as in particular to those of Christ, as true, yet the assents in believers may very much, not onely in the circumstances of the assent, but also in the immediate workings of the assent, differ. The Judgement is not equally captivated in all, or else why do some believers question and scruple more than others? yea, and why else needs there a further evidence and demonstration, to establish some in doctrinal truths, if all believers were equally grounded, and rooted in the word?

Yea, and why are some good people more apt to errors than others? no plausible error can be taught, or spread with the speciousness of taking reason, but presently they are questioning their old truths, for new opinions, which shews, that all assents to divine truths, are not alike in all believers.

Nay, and this appears to be so by the several instances of diabolical temptations, which in some are of that great force, as to make them not onely question their particular interests in God and Christ, (which may befall the highest believer) but also to question the first principles of Religion, whether there be a God, and whether the Scriptures are his Word, and whether true or false.

3 Reception, embracing or consent: though it be hearty and sincere in all, yet one beleever cannot so rest on Christ as another, nor doth every one take Christ by the hand alike. Like a childe, who gives out a trembling hand with some shruggings, even to his Father, so the believer may put forth his hand of faith, even to Christ, with many fears and shakings; O that I may have him, that I might receive him, that he would be mine, that I could lay hold on him! O that God would pardon my sinnes, saith one; yet another raiseth up the soul, I will rest on his promise in Christ to pardon all.

2 In the measure of degrees: Hence you read of that by Christ, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel, and, O woman great is thy faith, Abraham strong in faith, Paul perswaded, &c. and Job, I know that my, &c. In a comparative opposition to which, you read those phrases, O ye of little faith, and why didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith? and of the weak in faith.

The degrees of faith are many (viz.) the habitual inclination of the heart toward Christ, the actual laying hold on him, the strong embracing of him; reflection of the act, that I know I take him as Lord and Saviour; reflection of the object, I know that he is my Lord and Saviour; then, a fulness of this reflexive assurance, I doubt it not; then, the reasons of this full assurance, (which, whether it mean the great continuance, or the great abundance of the measure of assurance, is disputable) Again, the longer duration of this full and great assurance. Now in all these respects (except the first) faith in one may differ from faith in another: How many hearts are set onely towards Christ? O that I could apprehend him, but I cannot believe: How many souls do apprehend him? yet, O that we were apprehended by him; How many are apprehended by him? (that is) know him to be theirs, by some gracious and firm evidence? yet by and by with Mary weeping, they have taken away my Lord.

Yet some others rise high, and stay long in restings, in perswasions in affirmings, that it is heaven with them many days together.

You may see one Christian look up to heaven with tears of joy, (as Job, I know that my redeemer liveth.) Another looking up with tears of grief, (Lord be merciful to me a sinner.) You may see one sitting down with thanks, (who gave himself for me.) Another falling down in Prayer, (I believe, Lord help my unbelief.) You may see one triumphing above all fears and scruples, (I am perswaded that nothing shall separate me from the love of God in Christ,) and yet another combating with many fears, (but will the Lord be favourable unto mee?) One blesseth God for assurances, another cries unto God against doubtings: one is like Mary, rejoycing in God my Saviour, another like Esther, in venturing towards the Scepter, and, if I perish, I perish. One saith, thou art my rock, my fortress, my strong tower, my portion for ever, and the born of my salvation, another sighs and breaks out, O that salvation were come out of Sion, O that I could believe, O that I were once perswaded. Thus it is with several believers, as with several children: one lies in the cradle, another is led by the nurse, another is going by the chairs, and another can run. Or as it is with a flock of sheep, some are strong and bearing, others are young, and must be gently led or carried. Or as with an Orchard, some trees are able and well limbed, others are tender plants, and are weakly rising.

Reasons of which diversity, may be either the different ages of faith. In some it hath had a longer time of strengthening, in others it is but seed newly sown; or else different external helps; some believers are brought up in a more fertile soyl, under powerful Ministries which are experimentally acquainted with inward conflicts, and therefore are more suited to weak consciences to understand and remove their fears and doubts, and to answer objections, either arising from natural unbelief, or from Satans subtilties; others live upon a more hard hand, and want those directions and counsells.

Or else different assistances of Gods Spirit; for as that Spirit breathes where he lists, so he blowes where he lists: some he is pleased to assist more in a way of combate, others more in a way of conquest;

though he be the Spirit of life to all that believe, yet he is the Spirit of assurance, to some of those, more than to others.

Or else the different employments and services; all beleivers meet not with equal conflicts, either within or without, they are not put upon the same trials, he same crosses, the same difficult duties; Now the Lord is wise as well as good, and therefore proportions different measures of faith, according to the diverse degrees of exigencies: A man can do and suffer much after a day of gracious assurance, whose heart perhaps would have trembled, if his doubts and fears had been yet to be answered.

Yea, and some hearts are more apt to Pride and forgetfulnesse, which are therefore kept shorter, lest they should swell by multitude of revelations.

To all which if wee adde, that sometimes former sinnings may justly make the soul to tugge long for assurance, because the Lord will not give easie and sweet answer, before wee know that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against him.

SECT. III

Now I proceed to the second General, viz. the proofs of a strong faith, with the instances of a weak faith in truth.

Three queries how to know, 1 Whether our faith bee great; 2 or little; 3 and yet true.

You see there are two parts of this, I will begin with the first, which respects the discoveries of faith in strength.

Concerning which, take these things briefly. Signs of a great and strong faith.

1 Confidence of easie answers for great matters is an argument of a strong and great faith. As in the Centurion, who came to Christ for

the healing of his Servant, who was sick of a Palsie, and grievously tormented, speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed, (that is) Though he be very weak, yet I am confident that thy power is very strong, thou needest not to trouble thy person, one word from thy pleasure will heal him, Matth. 8:6, 7, 8. What faith Christ now of this faith? See vers. 10. Verily, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. The more difficult wee esteem things to bee in God or Christ, the weaker is our faith: If wee impose a different readinesse to help, or mercy, or pardon, on God, according to the different matter which wee are putting up unto him, this argues want of strength: For it is all one with God to pardon abundantly, as to pardon singly; and his power, is as able for the greatest difficulty, as for the least trouble. But when the soul draws neer unto him, and can beleve great matters, as well as small things; that hee will bee merciful to great transgressions, as well as compassionate to ordinary infirmities; that hee will subdue strong temptations, as well as weak glancings; that hee will in time conquer the busiest inclination to sin, &c. this shows that faith is come to some strength.

2 Again, a repetition of adherence, and a stedfast following of Christ, notwithstanding the discouragements, which the soul may bee apt to take from Christs behaviour towards it, argues their faith to be strong, and great, 2 Sam. 23:16. They were the three mighty men that brake through the Host, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, Matth. 15:22. As in that Woman of Canaan, who came to Christ to heal her daughter; Have mercy on me O Lord, thou son of David; how did Christ entertain her? (the text saith, hee answered her not a word) yet in the same verse it is said, shee cryeth after thee, (Christs silence raised her voyce the higher) Again, she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me, how is shee now answered? (It is not meet to take the Childrens bread and to cast it to dogges;) such an answer to some spirits, had been farre worse than silence; But mark it, her faith followed Christ still, and that very word which would discourage another, encouraged her; (O, that faith is strong which can urge Christ from a small hint) Truth Lord, said shee, yet the doggs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Masters table. As if

shee might say, Be it so Lord Jesus, I am no better than a Dog, an unworthy Creature, yet let me have the compassions to a Dogge, though not plenty, yet the crumbs. Now, what saith Christ of her? Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith. Remember it, that the faith which can bring up the soul, which can lead it up to Heaven against discouragements, though God doth not answer, yet I will seek; though hee kill mee, yet I will trust in him: I say, such a faith is strong; an exostulating faith, a faith which will make the soul to presse on after denials, after suspensions; it is come to a great measure of faith, which will not bee answered, or will not bee gone; a faith that will not let God goe, or Christ, until it speed. Jacob was as a Wrestler, hee would not let God goe except hee blessed him. A faith that can dispute it much with God, which will in a holy reasoning, take and urge God with God, and will so enforce the Promises on him (which hee hath made) that God is even fain to yield, Bee it unto thee as thou wilt, this is faith ripened.

3 The more entirely the soul is carried to expectation from the sole strength of a Divine promise, the greater and the stronger is that faith. As in Abrahams case; Hee wanted a Son, and God promised him an Isaac; Abraham did not now stagger through unbelief, hee did not consult the truth of it from his own natural abilities; How unable hee was, that hee neglected, but how able God was to perform his own word, upon this his faith did pitch. And for this the text saith, that hee was strong in faith, Rom. 4:20. Remember this, that the more sensible helps the soul needs to draw out the act of beleiving, the weaker is the faith; as the man is judged to bee very weak, who cannot goe without many Crutches and holdings; but the more strength a naked promise hath with the soul, when it alone puts life and quietnesse into us, new faith is grown; As David said, The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto mee. So when wee can quash all our troubles with the sight of a promise, I have Gods Word for my pardon, his Word for my help, his Word for my comfort, I desire no better Pay-master than God, no better security than his own promise; though all things stand contrary in

sense and feeling, yet all is sure in Gods promise, and there I will settle, this argues a great faith.

4 The more ability a man hath to deny himself in near and great occurrences, the greater is his faith; Abraham in leaving of his Country, parting with Isaac: The more easily wee can beleieve great things, and part with great things, the stronger is our faith. There is nothing more hard than to give up a mans self.

There is a three-fold self.

First, his sinful self, in respect of old and dear sins.

Secondly, his natural self, in respect of the separation of soul and body.

Thirdly, his temporal self, in respect of the comforts of this life. And it must bee a strong faith which must enable to strong denials of our selves, when a thing comes nearer to the quick, either when God denies a man a special comfort, or draws off from him a special comfort, now to submit, now to be quiet, I can doe all things through Christ that strengthens me, said Paul; I know how to want, and how to abound, to be exalted and to be abased, I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be contented.

To have the heart pleased with Christ alone, and satisfied with his presence; mark it, the more entirely that the soul makes up its state in Christ, and the lesse power that the World imprints upon the heart in its changes, this imports the faith is come to strength. Strong faith is like a strong tree, which holds its body unmoveable against great tempests, but weak faith is like a plant which every wind makes almost to touch the ground.

Fifthly, the weaker the arguments of distrust grow in the heart, this is a sign that the faith is got to a strength. This I conjecture, that the strength or weakness of faith is not to be judged by the multiplicity of distrustful arguments, but by the force and efficacy of them; It is

possible that manifold arguments of fear and doubts may present themselves to the minde of a strong believer, as well as unto the judgement of a weak beleever, but then, if faith be strong, it doth weigh them down, it doth prevail over them (that is) it brings the soul to Christ, it cleaves still unto him. The soul maintains its title to Christ, and owns God in his promises, it will not cast away its hope, nor its strength, wherein the soul can habitually foyle the reasonings which cross its way, and can clear up and vindicate its state, what God is to it, and Christ is to it, and what it hath received from them, this is an argument that it is not weak, but strong.

Sixthly, the more easie compliance with change of a mans condition is an evidence of a faith which is more strong. There are several changes incident to mans temporal life. The Moon sometimes is full, and anon it is in the Eclipse; our sea doth ebb and flow; sometimes prosperity (like the candle of the Lord) shines upon us, by and by adversity (like the wind) blows out the candle; sometimes we abound, and our mountain seems strong; anon we are stript, and our mountain is shaken; one while health and presence of friends, another while sickness and loss of all, Now in these changes not to be changed, like the ship, right up in a calm, but tossing and reeling in a storm, but to be as the rock fixed and settled, holding up, and rejoycing in the God of our salvation, and encouraging our selves in the Lord our God, and willing to be any thing, in any condition; yea, to bless God for all, as Job did. If I die, I shall go to God; If I live, I will serve my God; If I enjoy, I will be fruitful; If I want, I will be thankful; The more Passive the heart is, the more active and strong the faith is. Paul had been learning that lesson; In every state, therewith to bee content.

O when a Christian can comply with contrary states, not through an insensibleness of Spirit, but from an apprehension and approbation of divine wisdom, goodness, love, and authority, his faith is singularly cleared, and well improved.

7 The more satisfaction and quiescence that the soul hath in Christ alone, the greater is the faith; when a naked Christ, is the centre and loadstone, and the All in all, as the Sunne to make day, I desire to know nothing but Christ crucified, said Paul, 1 Cor. 2:2. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee, said Asaph, Psal. 73:25. I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, saith Paul again, Phil. 3:8. Lord, let thy servant now depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, said Simeon, Luke 2:29, 30. As when we come to heaven, we shall be so heavenly, that heaven alone will be enough to us, and this shews perfection; so whiles we live on earth, if Christ alone be heaven and earth to us, if hee can fill our hearts, and satisfie them. O Lord Jesus, thou art righteousness enough, satisfaction enough, wisdom enough, peace, and comfort, and pleasure enough to my soul: O this comes from great strength!

8 The more that the body of sin decays in strength, the lesser prevalency of it, this shews that faith is strong. When sinne becomes more dead in its actions, or more ineffectual in its temptations; When a man can walk and not stumble, and reel and fall; he is now out-grown his former weakness; It shews weakness, when every stone makes thee apt to fall; It is a sign the army is strong, when the enemy many of them are slain, and the rest are easily discomfited. Sinne is our enemy, and Christ is our General, and faith is our champion, and the more that sinnes fall, it is an argument that faith is become stronger; the victorious faith is much more than the combating faith: Sinnes go down by believing; the more that any grace is in victory, the more it is in strength. Indeed it argues truth of Faith to resist, but to conquer sinnes, this shews strength, to wrestle is something, but to overthrow is more; to oppose sinne, is not so much as to vanquish it.

10 The more fruitful a Christian is in his graces and exercises of them, the stronger is his faith. You know that the extension of the branches ariseth from the intention of the sap; if the branches grow big, and yield more fruit, it is because the root is more full and filled.

Faith is (well stiled) the radical grace; though the habits of other graces grow not out of it, yet the measures and exercises do exceedingly depend upon it: And, according to the latitude of faith, is the latitude of other graces; as the days receive shortness or length from the Sunne. A weak faith is attended but with a weak love, and a weak patience, and a weak hope, and a weak joy. But if the faith becomes strong, now it is spring with our graces, they revive and shoot out themselves, there will be much love, and much labour of love, and strong hope, and the better heart and life.

11 The more able a person is to live upon Christ, or Gods promises in the times of desertions and contrarities, the faith is certainly the greater. The more use any can make of God or Christ at all, his faith is greater; for the more that any soul beleeves, the more is his faith enabled thereby.

But then this is yet more strength, even against hope, to believe in hope, to look up for that God that hides himself; to venture on an angry God, one who seems to shut out our prayers, one that speaks bitter things unto us, like Levi, not to observe our own children, but to keep the Word and Covenant of God, Deut. 33:9.

12 The more able the soul is to wait on God, to pray and wait, the stronger is the faith. A waiting faith meets with more difficulties, and contrarities, and is upheld by the strength of a meer promise. That man not only hath faith, but lives by faith, if he can wait Gods time, &c.

13 When you can glorifie many promises at once by beleeving; yea, when every promise can be trusted on upon gracious terms, the more fully you can glorifie them by trusting for pardon of great sinnes, subduing of strong corruptions, deliverance out of great distresses, the stronger is your faith. The less difficulty you conceive in God to perform his Word; when you can come for great matters, with great confidence, less doubts, exceptions, fear, the less power discouragements have. If you can beleeve against sense, reason,

Though he kill mee, yet will I trust in him. These are discoveries of faith in strength.

SECT. IV

The second part of the second general point of the instances of weak faith in truth. Here are two things which I will touch.

One is, some demonstrations that faith is weak.

Another is, some directions of truth with that weaknesse.

Concerning the first, observe these things.

1 The more that doubtings stagger the heart, it is a sign that the faith is weak. As the more smoak goes up with the fire, it is an argument that the fire is little, or as the more a person halts and reels in his motion, it discovers the impotency of his strength and joynts. You read in Rom. 4:20. That staggering at the promise by unbelief, is opposed to a strong faith: observe that word (staggering) It is such a temper of the soul, wherein it doth suddenly and easily change its thoughts, and acts: As a man who is staggering, his foot checks (as it were) it self, and alters its pace and place; to when a mans heart is giving on, and then falling off, may I take? may I not? I will lay hold, I will not; God will be good to me, he will not; I shall have mercy, yet I shall not; this is staggering.

The soul lets go its hold, doubtings prevail against actual beleeving; the beleeving soul sees strong arguments to draw it to fasten on Christ, and on mercy, and then it is putting forth the hand; but then unbelief thrusts forth contrary arguments of suspicion and fears, so that the soul is in doubts; may I indeed lay hold, but will the Lord be merciful to me? Why didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith, said Christ to Peter? and this stands with reason, for the stronger that quality is which is contrary to faith, the weaker is that faith which is contrary to that quality; as the stronger sickness is, the weaker health is, &c.

2 The more easily a man can suspect Gods favour and Christs love; this is a sign that faith is weak. See Psal. 77:7, 8, 9, and then vers. 10. They say of love, that the more pure love hath least fear, 1 Joh. 4:18. and multitude of jealousies is an argument of mixture in the affections. So it is of faith, the more stedfastly it can hold up the immutability of Gods love and kindness, and his ancient grants of favour, the stronger is the faith: But the more apt it is to question the loving kindnesse which hath been ever of old, now it is the weaker, Luke 24:21. Wee had trusted that it had been hee which should have redeemed Israel, and besides all this to day is the third day.

There bee two things which a weak faith is very apt to challenge.

One in God for kindnesse.

Another in its own estate for soundnesse. As Gideon said in another case, If the Lord bee with us, why is all this evil befallen us? so where the faith is weak, the soul is often in sute with God: yea, but if God were my God, had I an interest in Christ, were my estate good, could it be with mee thus, could it be thus within me, thus without me, thus upon me? &c.

3 The more quick and hastening that the soul is for answer and satisfactions, the more impatient of Gods delayings, this is a sign that it is now weak in faith. For did it thorowly beleieve, it would not make haste, were it perswaded fully of Gods goodnesse, which makes the promise, of his wisdome, which will take the fittest time for the grant, it would now quietly wait and expect: But an over hastening, when the soul will scarce allow any time betwixt the petition and the speeding of it, but I must presently have it, or else God is not my God, or else my state is bad; I say, hasty eagernesse to be answered, and quick conclusions from Gods silence, do shew much weaknesse of faith in the soul; There is an importunity which may come from faith, and this is a holy pressing of a promise, yet with submission and patience; And there is an hastinesse which comes from fear: As if

God would not always be in a good mind towards us, as if the present testimonies must be the only arguments of his love and intentions.

These two things will usually meet in a man whose faith is weak.

One is, hee will be hasty to be answered.

Another is, he will be faint if delayed.

4 The more inclining the heart is to the life of sense, the weaker is the faith: like Thomas, unless he seeth the print of the nails, &c. he will not beleeve, Joh. 20:25. So unless Christians have promises budding, they will hardly beleeve that there is fruit growing on them; unless I feel the sensible favour of God, I will not beleeve that he loves me; unless I read my pardon, I will not beleeve mercy; unless I discern sensible means, I will not beleeve helps; unless I feel sin slain in me, I will not beleeve that God will subdue it; All these in promises affect not, and support not the heart. It is a sign of a weak Child, that must still be carried in the arms. When a mans perswasions cannot be wrought by the naked word of promise, without some sensible pledges and pawn, hee is very weak. When hee is puzzling his heart in an endless maze of disorder, viz. hee would have the things of the promise, and then beleeve the fidelity of the promise, this argues weakness. The abstractions of things from sense, when God gathers up all a mans estate, or any particular good, only into his promise, into his own hand, and saith, now canst thou beleeve that I will be good unto thee? I promise thee to be thus and thus; wilt thou now trust me, wilt thou adventure thy soul now upon my word of pardon and mercy, upon my word of grace and help? so to doe would evidence much strength.

Now you may observe a manifest difference betwixt strong and weak faith; If strong faith seeth its estate in the promise, it hath enough, it goes away rejoicing; if weak faith hath not some of the estate in its own hand, as well as in Gods hand, it is troubled and afraid.

5 The more hardly a beleever comes to bee perswaded and assured of Gods undertakings in Covenant, his faith is weak. When one word of God is not enough, but God must say it once and twice, and yet again more clearly: As Gideon would have one sign, the fleece must be wet, and the earth dry; and then another sign, fleece must be dry, and dew lye upon all the earth, Judg. 6:37, 39. This shewed weakness in his faith; so doth it in a Christian, when not one or two promises, and scarce all of them, with all the arguments in God and in Christ, can perswade him that God will be merciful to him, or that Christ belongs to him.

6 The more easie the soul is to let goe that assurance, the weaker is faith in it; when a soul is like a weak hand clasping a staff, and the staff is easily wrested out; so the soul lets goe that promise, which did revive it, and that Christ, which seemed to embrace it, this argues weakness; as in Peter, when he beleved that it was Christ on the Sea, upon Christs Word hee ventures out, but when the waves met him, he begins to sink, his faith was weak, Why didst thou doubt, O thou of little faith? said Christ to him. Though Christs Word drew him out of the Ship, yet it did not hold him up all alone; And the Disciples, Wee trusted it had been hee who should have redeemed Israel. So when a temptation comes upon a soul, and the soul is ready to bee led by it, to credit it against Gods promise, and Gods testimony in the Conscience, this aptness to let goe our hold argues much fear, and much fear argues weak faith.

7 The more apt the soul is to insist on personal and inherent qualities and abilities, as *media fiducia*, means of perswasion, this shews that the faith is weak: when something in us makes us the more confident, as when it is unapt to beleieve, unless it can discern such an inherent strength of graces, to mourn, and to pray, or to keep down sin, or keep off temptation.

Object. It is true, these abilities are testimonies, but yet they are not *Media*.

Sol. They are evidences of a solid faith, but they are not means or causes of beleeving. The means or causes are Gods promises, which ought (alone) to be our foundations and encouragements. Now when a person is unapt to beleeve that God will do these things for him, unless these things be done, this is weakness. Good things, when they are done, they are matters of thankfulness, and when they are promised, they are matters of faith. They say in Logick, that demonstratio à posteriori, is the weaker demonstration, that à priori is much stronger: for this depends on the cause, and that on the effect. So is it in beleeving. A beleeving, à priori, from the perswasion of what God saith, (from his goodness and truth) is more strong than a beleeving à posteriori (that is) from a fruition or apprehension of what God doth.

8 The more dull and uncheerful the heart is, this shews the faith to be weak: A sad Spirit, and a weak faith, usually are companions: for a strong faith breeds much peace in the conscience, Rom. 5:1, 2. and rejoycing, 1 Pet. 1:8. In whom (though now ye see him not) yet beleeving ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory: such a faith as this, hath got to much assurance, but uncheerfulness of heart argues either, as yet the want of all assurance, or assurance very weak.

9 The more anxious and careful the soul is, it is a sign of a weak faith. What shall wee eat? and what shall wee drink? and what shall wee put on? This our Saviour saith in Matthew 6. shews little faith. For the lesser the things are for which we are to trust, the more weakness is there if we do distrust, especially where the helper is sufficient and willing, and hath past his promise; Now, God is willing to do for Beleevers more than all the earth is worth, and hath done greater matters for them; And therefore a suspition of him for small matters, shews but a small perswasion.

10 The more apt the heart is to be offended at the estate of Christ, it is a sign that faith is weak. This is evident in the Disciples, who being weak in faith, Christ was forced to keep many things in, because they

were not able to bear them; and when he spake of his sufferings, and departing from them, they were much amazed and troubled.

SECT. V

Thus for the discoveries of faith in weakness: Now follow the demonstrations of the truth in faith, though weak.

The truth of faith hath a great latitude, it is not confined to such an height, to such a point of eminency, as some conceive. Look as heat hath several degrees, and as health hath many species, and as life hath many steps within which the true nature of them may be seated, so is it with faith, the true nature of it may be in a great measure, and yet in a lesser measure, and though weak faith be not strong, yet it is faith: weakness is not like death, which is opposed to life, but like infirmity, which is opposed to strength. Strong faith is weak faith more perfected, and weak faith is strong faith in disposition, in tendency, it is within the compass. Negation is one thing, imperfection is another thing; no faith is quite opposite to faith, but weak faith if it be opposed to strength, yet it is not opposed to truth.

Now the truth of weak faith may appear in these things.

First, though weak faith be not sure that Christ is its Saviour, yet weak faith will honour Christ as its Lord: though it cannot see Christ, bestowing it self on the soul, yet it will make the soul to resign up it self to Christ: though it cannot find comfort, yet it will oppose sin: though it cannot comprehend Christ, yet it would not willingly offend Christ. Faith in strength can put out it self in perswasion, I know that my redeemer liveth, Job 19. Yet faith in weakness, (as was that of Thomas) can put forth it self in subjection, My Lord, and My God; I will have no Lord but Christ, John 20.

The vital act of faith is not reflexive, but direct. It is not, this Christ is mine, but this, I receive, and embrace Christ, now the weak faith cannot settle its title to Christ, so as strong faith can do, yet it can vindicate the title that Christ hath to the soul, though it cannot see its

own propriety in Christ, yet it can maintain Christs propriety to it, it doth acknowledge, it doth yield unto no Law, or power, or right, over the soul, but Christs: it looks on sin as an enemy, though it cannot see Christ as a friend.

2 What weak faith doth want in the breadth of perswasion, that it makes up in the depth of humility. A weak believer, though he cannot see himself great in Gods eyes, yet he doth appear low in his own eyes: it will not quarrel with God, because he opens himself no more, but abaseth it self, because it is most unworthy of the least of truth and goodness.

There be two things which all true faith will work.

One is to value Christ.

Another is to undervalue our selves; It can put glory on Christ, and shame to it self; He is the sweetest Saviour, and I am the greatest sinner.

Faith usually acts in one of these, either in receiving, or in abasing: For either it makes the soul to see its happiness in Christ, which breeds joyfulness, or to see its own unworthy vileness, because of sin, and so it causeth lowliness of Spirit. Strong faith (like John) can be in Christs bosome, but weak faith (like Peter) will fall down at Christs feet; strong faith may be seen by the eye, & weak; faith by the knee; that stands up and blesseth God for Christ, this falls down and begs of God for Christ. And this, not for my sake, O Lord, (for to mee belongs nothing but shame and confusion) but for thy goodness sake, O Lord, (for to thee belong mercies and forgivenesses.)

3 Weak faith, though it hath but tender confidences of its interest in Christ, yet it hath strong dislikes, and combates with that unbelief which hinders his perswasion. Though weak faith cannot see Christ as its ease, &c. yet it can feel unbelief as its burden and trouble.

There are two things (if I mistake not) which accompany all true faith, and the weakest.

One is to magnifie the state in Christ.

Another is to dislike the state out of Christ. O happy is that man, who can comprehend, as he is comprehended, saith weak faith, and what shall I do with this unbelieving heart, this doubting, suspecting, fearful heart? shall I always question? shall I always finde these disputings? carnal reasonings, reelings, staggerings? Lord help this unbelief, Lord perswade this heart of mine, cause it to trust in thy salvation in Christ, say unto my soul, that thou art my salvation.

The weak beleever hath many prayers in his heart, many tears in his eyes, and many conflicts in his minde; he believes and doubts, he prays and doubteth, he mourns and doubteth, yet though he doubts he will believe, and though he doubts he will pray, and because he still doubts he will therefore still mourn. He looks often towards Christ, O that I could believe, hee looks often on his own heart, why wilt thou not yet believe? he looks up to God, O make me to believe; somtimes he spends his time in prayer for more faith, sometimes in dispute with his weak faith; one main difference 'twixt him and the strong believer is this, that the strong believer hath got into Christs arms, and this weak believer is fighting for the way unto him.

4 Weak faith will not rest in weakness, if truth be in it. In a weak childe, well and living, there are two qualifications of life, one is this, that it is Active; another is this, that it is Progressive; it will be doing, and it will be encreasing. So it with all true faith, though weak, it is a drawing of the soul unto Christ, yea, it is a drawing of something more from Christ unto the soul; what hinders it, that grieves it, and what it wants, after that it longs and craves. No grace is right which is idle, or labours not to exceed it self. Lord help my unbelief, said that weak believer. O Lord encrease our faith, said they of little faith. The weak crible, he would be lying at the Pool, and so will weak faith, it

will be at the means of strength: It loves to be doing about Christ, and to be where the strength of Christ is revealed.

It is wise to observe the grounds of its fears and doubtings, and careful to remove them. O how earnest is the weak believer to hear what God will speak unto him, and if at any time the soul can get by the assistance of the Word, to close with mercy and Christ, it is revived with joy of tears, and falls down with thanks, Lord what is thy servant!

Nay, if it hath apprehended but a hint, but a crevice, if it be enabled but a little to step above its dark doubtings, to apprehend but a darting beam, any perswasion that all is well, or will be so, it is refreshed, and saith, that God is good. I observe, that the weak child will be much after the breasts, and the weak man will handle his staff much, and the weak believer will be much at the places and ordinances, and ways of more strength.

It is with faith as it is with a blade of corn, at the first, the ear of grain is quite skinned over, yet it breaks open a side, and at length is the very top of the stalk. So faith at first is swathed over with doubting, (none but a tender and merciful God can see that little mustard-seed) but at length, it opens to more adherence on God and Christ, and promises, and in time it can triumph against its former fears and suspicions. Or it is like a weak man recovering: if he can but stand, it is well, then if he can set on in a few paces with his staff, then if his motion can be single, then if longer, then if stronger; so is it with faith, if it can make the soul to look upon Christ, then if it could look on him as mine, then if so without fear, then if so with joy, then if so with strength, and stedfastness.

It will not rest in weakness, though it begins in weakness, but like the weak Ivie which is winding up the tree, so will faith be winding up the soul higher and higher into Christ by the help of his Spirit, of his Promises, of his Word, and of his Sacraments.

5 Weak faith will yet venture the soul upon Christ, though it cannot clear its title, nor answer its fears, nor (to its own sense) rely on Christ; yet if the soul be put and determined to one of these, either to renounce all hope in Christ, and so to be lost, or to put it self upon Christ, though it hath no inward encouragement from it self; I say at such a time, even weak faith will discover it self, it will not renounce its hidden interest in Christ, but will roul the soul on him; If I perish, I perish, yet I will cleave to Christ, yet I will cast my soul on him, and on his blood, and righteousness.

SECT. VI

The third general which we observed to the former scruple, was the concordance of all faith which is true (whether strong or weak) in fundamental comforts.

First, every beleever hath a sure interest in Christ; It is with the members of Christ, as with the members of the body, though they are not all of equal strength, in a comparison one with the other, yet they are of equal conjunction in a relation of all of them to the head.

So one believer exceeds another in a special measure of faith, yet every believer is a member firmly and surely knit to Christ, the head of all believers. Christ is not the Saviour and Lord only of the strong, but also of the weak, not onely the old man, nor only the young man, but also the children, the little children, (to whom Saint John wrote) they are all in Christ, 1 John 2.

There is a wide difference 'twixt reflexive certainty, and 'twixt real certainty of interest, strong faith hath the pre-eminence of weak faith, in respect of a reflexive and sensible certainty, but not in respect of a real certainty, this is univocal, the union 'twixt Christ and the soul, doth not depend upon the strength, but upon the truth of faith; If my will consents unto Christ, if my heart accepts of him upon his own terms, if I take his whole person, and his whole condition, the match is truly made 'twixt Christ and me, he is surely mine, and I

am surely his. Although I am not in an assured condition, yet I am in a sure union; Christ doth certainly own that soul, which by faith doth truly embrace him: All mine are thine, and thine are mine, saith Christ, Joh. 17:10. He speaks of the Disciples, and of all the Elect, who were the Fathers in respect of a gracious election, and gift, and Christs in respect of a tender affection and union. So that here is one concordance of all faith in respect of fundamental comfort, viz. that the objective unity is one and common, the weak and the strong eye meet in the same colours as the object, and weak and strong faith, are two different hands, yet both of them upon one and the same Christ.

Secondly, every beleever hath a beneficial interest in Christ: (that is) weak faith hath an interest in the benefits of Christ, as well as the strong faith.

I will instance in some special and choice benefits.

First, Redemption from the Malediction of the Law; Christ took that off, He was made a curse for all that believe on him: He did not stand in the room only of eminent, but of every beleever, and endured the wrath to the utmost for every one who doth believe on him.

Thou art freed from a cursed estate by the least faith; every degree of true faith makes the condition to bee a state of life, and passeth us from death and condemnation. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 3:1.

Secondly, Remission of sinnes, what Christ said to that impotent person, Son bee of good cheer, thy sinnes are forgiven thee, that is true of every beleever, Christ hath purchased a pardon for him, Acts 13:38. Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. Ver. 39. And by him all that beleever are justified, &c.

If any believer went without his discharge, then probable it is that the weakest should be hee, but the Scripture speaking of the weakest

faith, makes it an hand holding a pardon in it. 1 John 2:12. I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his names sake; though children, though little children, yet pardoned children, and mark it, the cause of that pardon was common to them with the stronger men, (viz. for his Names sake) a man is not pardoned for the strength of his faith, nor debarred of it for the weakness of his faith, but both the one and the other enjoys it for his Names sake, (that is) for Christs sake.

Nay, observe it, that though strong and weak faith may vary much in the manner and degree of the apprehension or perswasion, or reading of the pardon, yet they both agree in the strength, and in the latitude of pardon. The weak believer hath as an effectual, and as ample, and full remission as the strongest believer; for Christ did not become an unequal surety, or an uneven Sacrifice for sinne; my meaning is this, that he did not only undertake the debts of some believers, but of every one; nor did he undertake some debts only of some believers, but all the debts of all believers. Therefore it is said, Isa. 53:6. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all; and Jer. 32:8. I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, which words extend to all believers, because to all that are covenanted.

Thirdly, Justification by imputed righteousness; There is a common equal interest in this by all believers: It is but one garment for every believer, it is an entire thing. One believer hath not one righteousness to justifie him, and another believer another, but all are justified by the same righteousness of Christ, neither is the imputation of this righteousness partial, or unequal, but alike to all that believe, Rom. 3:21. The righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. Ver. 22. Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference. Therefore God is said (in v. 26) the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; if any man doth truly believe in Christ, God justifies that man, and Christ is made righteousness unto him, (that is) the Lord will

reckon unto him the righteousness of Christ, he will in Christ pronounce him just, and acquit him.

The most elevated beleever cannot be presented in a judicial way before Gods justice safely, in the strength of his own perfections, and therefore hath no reason to glory or boast; and the most weak believer is not excluded, but adorned with the robe of Christs compleat righteousness, notwithstanding his own manifold imperfections, and therefore hath no reason so be discouraged or dismayed, for as much as Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believes, Rom. 10:4.

Fourthly, the inheritance of glory, even those weak Disciples who were oft rebuked for their fears and doubtings, were commanded by Christ to rejoyce; because their names were written in the book of life.

If we be Believers, we are sonnes, and if sonnes, then heirs, heirs of life, and co-heirs with Christ in glory, Rom, 8:16, 17; Gal. 3:26. Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Ver. 29. And if ye be Christs, then are ye Abrahams seed, and heirs according to the promise, John 3:16. Whosoever beleeveth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life, for eternal life is founded in Christ, God hath put all life in him, from him we draw our life of grace, and by him we possess our life of glory, 1 John. 5:11. God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Ver. 12. He that hath the Son hath life.

Obj. Yea but who are they who have the Son?

Sol. See ver. 13. These things have I written unto you, that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, as if he should say, every believer is he who hath the Son, and by him that eternal life.

3 Every beleever hath vertual interest in Christ, (that is) hee shall partake of the vertues, and graces, and strength of Christ.

The Vertues of Christ are many; I will touch at some, viz.

1 A Crucifying vertue, which subdues the love and dominion of sin, now every beleever shares in this, though one beleever bee more troubled with the insolent motions of sin than another, yet no beleever shall lye under the dominion of sin, Romans 6:14. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under grace. Galath. 5:24. And they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. Every beleever is gathered under the rod and Scepter of Christ, and is made alive to Christ, and dead to sin, yea, and Christ will more and more mortifie his corrupt heart; He will be made death to the strongest lust in the weakest beleever.

2 An assisting vertue, which aydes the soul in matter of duty and service; now Christ will not only guide the strong, but also lead the weak beleever: He will send forth his enabling strength for all the services which he requires, 2 Cor. 12:9. He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness; most gladly therefore will I glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. As if he should say, there was weaknesse and infirmity on Pauls part, but there was strength and power on Christs part, and this strength would Christ make to appear in Pauls weakness (that is) though Paul saw and felt his own strength insufficient, yet he should find Christ sufficient, sufficiently inabling him in that particular. Rom. 8:26. Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for wee know not what wee should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot bee uttered. Mark that place, though we are very infirm, very weak to any holy duty, to Prayer and the rest, yet Christ will help, he will come in with his Spirit, which shall enable us with supplications, so that even very weak beleevers may take comfort in this, that Christ will strengthen and aid them by his Spirit in duties, as well as the strongest.

The greatest beleever cannot perform service by his own strength, and the weakest shall bee inabled by Christs.

There bee three things which Christ will communicate to every beleever, even to the weakest, about duty.

One is, an affection and heart.

Another is, Strength and assistance.

The last is, Pardon and acceptance; what is amisse, and wanting, shall bee pardoned, and what is imperfectly, and weakly good, shall yet through his intercession bee accepted.

His Father (for his merits) will not despise the day of small things.

3 Persevering vertue, by which the soul comes at length to cast Anchor, and to bee safely landed. Now the strong faith hath (in a sort) Heaven already, yet weak faith shall also make a saving voyage: as it was with them in Pauls shipwrack, some of them could swim, and quickly, and better get to shore; others were more unskillful, and therefore laid hold and made use of broken boards, yet the text saith, That they all came safe to land: That I say of strong and weak faith, though the strong beleever can better cut through the manifold oppositions of the World, though bee can rise more easily above the waves of Satans temptations than the weak beleever, yet both of them shall hold out to the end, and meet at Heaven. You see several Bottoms at Sea, one makes more speed than another, and perhaps is better ordered; but those duller and flower Bottoms follow after, and at length they come to the same Haven, and so cast Anchor together. So, &c.

That Christ, who is the Author, will also bee the finisher of all true faith, and though faith may be very weak, yet the weakest faith is invincible: The gates (no not) of Hell (and they import the strongest opposition) shall not prevail against it. It is confessed, that Satan may much assault and batter, and the World may oppose and totter,

and Sinne may weaken, interrupt, and stagger even the foundations of the truest faith; but to be oppressed is one thing, and to be suppressed is another thing; to be wounded is one thing, to be killed is another; For faith to fall in its strength is one thing, for faith to fail in its being is another; Simon, Simon (said Christ to Peter) Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: O malicious devil, who hath strong temptations to weaken faith! O gracious Saviour, who hath stronger intercessions to preserve faith! even the weakest faith is wrought by a divine hand, and is kept by an almighty guard; See 1 Pet. 1:5. who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; Answering the prayer of Christ, John 17:11. Holy Father, keep them through thy own Name, those whom thou hast given me, ver. 20. Neither pray I for these only, but for them also which shall beleve on mee through their word. Whosoever beleves on mee shall not perish, said Christ.

Again, this is a sweet comfort, that the weak believer shall hold out as well as the strong, and that Christ is the Guardian of both; verily, that must needs be good which God gives, and that must needs be sure which Christ keeps; the weakest beleever is held by a strong hand, and is secured by an inseparable arm.

4 Every beleever is in the same fundamental league with God, he is reconciled unto him, and hath a true (nay for ought I yet understand) an equal interest in his special love and tenderness: It is freely confessed, that the strong believer hath more sensible discoveries of the streams, yet the weak believer is as deep in the fountain. They say in Logick, that substantial relations do not admit of degrees of more and less, as the Father is an equal Father to every childe, his paternity and their filiation are indivisible things; So is it I am sure in this business, God is one & the same Father to all that believe; his radical love is alike, his fundamental gifts (which testifie that love) are all alike, one and the same Word, one and the same Christ, one and the same Sacraments, one and the same Spirit. And for his tenderness, why? If any childe findes the gentle voice and easie hand, it is the weak childe; If any believer findes soft and encouraging

expressions from God, it is the weak beleever. God would have them comforted, yea, hee hath prepared the breasts of consolation for such sucklings; yea, and the knees to dandle them; yea, the hands to lead them, yea, the arms to carry them: And Christ will not quench the smoaking flax, nor bruise the broken reed. How often doth God call upon the weak ones, to look up and behold their King, and their salvation, and to trust upon him, and not to fear, nor to be dismayed? nay, for his sake doth he often double and treble the promise; yea, he confirms the promise, I will surely have mercy on him; yea, he takes his oath, he swears by himself, that he will not lie unto them, nor fail them, yea, he ratifies and seals his word with blood and truth.

O how doth God condescend in his nature, in his Word, in his ways, in his dealings, in his forbearances towards weak beleevers? how hath he prevented and answered all objections to their hands? all which shews his singular love and tenderness unto them.

SECT. VII

Now I proceed to the fourth and last discovery, viz.

The inequality of strong and weak faith in respect of circumstantial comforts, and some other consequences; thus they differ exceedingly, though both be in a sure and saving condition.

1 The weak beleever falls short of that joy which the strong beleever possesseth.

Joy may be considered three ways; either in its cause, which is the love of God, and the blood of Christ; or in its title and claim, which belongs to faith receiving Christ; or in its actual presence and feeling, which depends upon a believing apprehension and perswasion. Now, though the weakest believer hath cause of great joy, for as the Angel spake to the shepherds, that may be said to him, Fear not, for behold I bring you good tydings of great joy, for unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, Luke 2:9, 10.

And though hee hath a true title to the sweetest joy, for faith doth unite him to Christ, and Christ entitles him to joy, yet he hath not such an actual presence of joy as the strong beleever. Every faith is an hand, holding, but the strong faith is the mouth tasting that sweet wine. He hath not such full apprehensions of his own state, hee doth not yet so clearly conceive of that great love and goodness which God hath put in Christ for him; He hath not such an evident view of his own particular interests in God or Christ, but is infinitely tossed with doubtings and suspitions, whether hee may yet take Christ as his, whether hee may own the promises of mercy, and appropriate the great loving kindness of a Father. Now ignorance is apt to breed suspitions, and doubts are apt to raise fears, both of which keep off or under actual joy: No man can well joy in a concealed good, or joy much in a questioned title: All the good which God hath firmly and largely made over unto mee in his Son, it doth not affect my heart with gladness and rejoycing, whiles I am in dispute with it, and am rather apt to conclude, it is not for mee, than that it is my portion. The stronger beleever therefore hath this advantage of the weak, hee is more acquainted in particular about his good, and so his heart rejoyceth with joy unspeakable and glorious, his soul doth rejoyce in God his Saviour: but the weak believer cannot yet see his pardon, yea often suspects whether it shall bee drawn or no: one is in a fair day, the other in a wet; It is day to both.

The matter is clear to the strong believer, and therefore his heart goes away rejoycing; the matter is doubtful to the weak believer, and therefore his soul goes away weeping. One of them hath a good Christ, and a glad heart too; the other hath a good Christ, but yet a very heavy heart: His possession is doubtful, and therefore his heart is sorrowful.

2 The weak believer hath not that sweet peace that the strong believer hath: where faith is weak, there the conscience is not throughly settled.

Peace in the conscience is, as it were, the harmonious tuning of the soul, it is an heavenly tranquillity, a serenity, a gracious quieting and pacifying of the spirit of man, springing from a perswasion of Gods love in Christ: Now, the weak faith hath strong scruples, it hath many troubles, it is not sure that all is right, and all is clear. It may be that God is my God, and it may be he is not; it may be Christ is mine, and perhaps not; it may be my sins are pardoned, and it may be they are not; it may be that God is my friend, and reconciled, and it may be he is not. You know that the peace of a Christian must be seen ratified in a double Court, or else the soul will not be quiet; One is in the Court of heaven, another is in the Court of conscience; Nay, and the peace in this lower Court is not clear til it comes from the higher Court, conscience can not be quiet till God be quiet, it cannot give testimony & discharge until God hath begun: If God hath not yet dismissed the soul, if he holds up the case of a sinful soul without release, conscience cannot acquit and free that soul: But weak faith sees its sute and trial yet depending in the high Court of heaven; a weak believer doth not yet see or know that God will assuredly pardon him, that God is reconciled unto him, that God will indeed do good unto him, here are his doubts and fears, and therefore here are his troubles and perplexities.

The strong believer is like David in Psal. 4:8. I will both lay me down, and sleep, for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety.

The weak believer is like David in Psal. 42:11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou thus disquieted within me?

The one is like the Mother which hath the childe in her arms, or at her breasts, with many smiling delights and satieties; the other is like the mother now in labour, and travail with the childe, which hath many bitter throwes and pangs one succeeding the other: The one is like a man standing upon a rock, where his foot stands unmoved and steady; but the other is like a man in a safe ship, upon unquiet waters, tossed up and down: Weak faith is in a safe ship, (which is Christ) but tossed upon variety of waves, (which are our doubtings)

sometimes faith and hope, anon faith and fear; sometimes I may have confidence, anon I am cast out of his sight; now I will look up to God as mine in Christ, by and by, surely this is presumption, God will not accept of me.

Such a storm, and such a calm is there in the weak believer, such an unsettled settling: The day of his small comforts doth easily set, and the night of many troubles abide long upon him. You shall seldom see a weak believer without a tear at his eye, a sigh in his breast, and a fear in his heart, yet I fear all is not sure, O that God would once assure me that he is my God! I know not what to do, or what to say, or what to think, I cannot see the hand-writing yet blotted out, nor the heavens opening, and do you think there is any hope for me? Thus the weak believer. But strong faith can answer many arguments, and uphold its evidence against many temptations: It can more easily place and stay the soul upon its rest, it hath seen and tasted more than weak faith, it knows whom it hath trusted, and that he will be its God and guide for ever; that he hath pardoned transgressions, and will remember iniquity no more; where faith is great, there the war is strong with sin, and the love high to God, and the peace more large and settled in the conscience.

3 The weak believer hath not that sweetness in communion with God as the strong believer hath. Take him in the way of Ordinances, or in the way of Duties, in both, his conversings with God, are more brackish and flat. When any threatning is opened and applyed, his heart presently misgives him, may not this concern me? and I fear this is my portion. When any precepts and graces are revealed and differenced, he is usually apt to charge want of them, or hypocrisie under them, upon himself, either I am not thus as God requires, or if so, yet not in truth.

When the Box of ointment is opened, I mean the blood of Christ, and the tender of rich mercy, and spacious promises of God, yet the savour of them is mixt to his soul, he doth more dispute his right, than can close with their goodness; yea, but how know I that I am

intended? and answers, I am not ripe for such consolations, my wounds have not bled sufficiently, I am not fitted, I doubt I should presume, if I should apply.

Again, in matter of duty, here he hath not a sweet communion with God neither. Sometimes so over-born, that he thinks it in vain for him to pray or look up, and therefore is ready (in a fit of temptation) to lay aside the work, yet hee cannot but pray, but then the knee is bended with such suspitions and conclusions, perhaps this shall be but to harden me more, and God will not hear me; or if the soul can gather any degrees of better confidence, that it shall finde some grace and acceptance, then instantly it questions all this, and suspects even the very grants, & answers, as well as its own heart & petitions, conjecturing them to be rather the deluding fancies of a deceitful heart, wishing well to it self, than the sincere resolutions and satisfactions of a good and gracious God, who heareth prayer.

And thus is the weak believer (for a long time) kept in bitterness, he cannot taste the goodness of God, which he desires to embrace, nor relish those promises which he desires to apply, but in all communions with God, either disheartens his way before, or displaceth his comforts afterwards; either he is not fit to pray, or else he is not fit to enjoy; either he cannot desire what is good, or else still he is questioning what is true. So that oft-times, even the ways of his own comfort are uncomfortable to him, and the very method of peace, is his usual trouble and vexation.

The reasons of all which may be,

Not only the nature of unbelief, which is an uncomfoting ingredient, and disquieting impedient to the soul in all holy communion, but also the properties of this unbelief, causing the soul to look more on it self than God, and raising more fears for present want, than hopes for assured and promised helps, besides the limitings of God to present satisfaction, or else concluding, no interest in his favour and gracious intentions; besides, forgetting usually the mediation and

intercession of Christ, in whom alone the soul and petitions are worthy.

4 The weak believer hath not that successfulness in communion with God as the strong believer hath.

For all doubtings do prejudice our suits: There is not a more sure and compendious way to non-sute our suits, than by delivering them out of an unbelieving heart: No faith may be sure of denial, & he who delivers up his requests to God with an hand, and an hand, with an hand of faith, and an hand of doubting, either he hath a longer, or else a shorter answer. According to thy faith be it unto thee, said Christ; strong faith brings God much glory, and doth fetch in much good to the soul, but the lesser faith, the lesser good; as according to the largeness of the vessel or strength of the hand, &c. The higher the Sun is, the more light is in the Horizon, so the greater the faith is in our requests, the sooner and the larger shall be our promised answers. You remember what Elisha said unto Joash King of Israel, take the arrows, and he took them, and hee said, smite upon the ground, and he smote thrice, and stated. And the man of God was wrath with him, and said, thou shouldst have smitten five or six times, then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it, whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice. Prayer is the arrow of the soul, it is the swift messenger sent up to heaven, and faith is the hand which dispatcheth it; now according to the strength of faith is the greatness of prayer in success. Thou didst pray (though) with much weakness of faith, and hast got a little comfort, why didst thou not smite the ground six times? why didst thou not double thy strength in believing? thou shouldst then have had comfort, like a river, whereas now thou hast onely the smaller drops. Thou hast prayed (though) with much weakness of faith, and hast got a little power over thy sinful and rebellious heart, why didst not thou smite the ground six times? why didst thou not abound in more believing? for then thou shouldst have had a fuller victory over thy corrupt lusts and inclinations. Herein hath strong faith the pre-eminence of weak, that the one hath not that full speed at heaven as the other; not that

God will not answer the faith that is weak, but that its answers are not so full, because it is accompanied with doubtings. This we finde experimentally, that our helps (much of them) yet stick behind in heaven, and our corruptions (much of them) yet insult below in our hearts, not that we do not hate them, nor that we do not pray against them, but because our faith is new or weak, we rather think that God will not help, than that he will indeed answer or do us good.

5 The weak believer is more under the power of the creature than the strong. My meaning is this, that his heart is more apt to sink, and fail, and perplex, and disquiet him in the changes of outward things; a cross cannot come but he startles, and if the affliction be close, he can hardly hold up; if he hath not some friends to smooth and cherish him, some calm estate to maintain and uphold him: If the tyde comes not in, if the winde doth net blow, if the fig-tree doth not blossome, if God puts him upon an unusual way, if he toucheth him in his Name, ease, advantage, any neer outward support, if the cross be long, now I am cast off, I shall perish, what shall I eat? what shall I drink? what shall I put on? we and ours are undone, there's none cares for my body, as David spake for his soul. The heart gathers into many agonies, many prognostications, many challenges of God, many impatient vexations, perhaps murmurings, repinings, and discontents, and distempers; yea, and hath sometimes vile and inglorious thoughts of the fruitlessness of serving God, &c. I think there is scarce any one of these, which the weak believer doth not sensibly feel in the times of his straights and exigences, (which may exceedingly humble and abase his soul therefore:) But the strong beleever is a better Sea-man, his soul is more quiet in the absence, because more loosened by faith in the presence of the creature. In a fair day God was much better; though others break with joy in the fruition of wine and oyl; yet Lord, saith David, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon mee. As if hee should say, I prize and joy in that more than in any thing else.

In a Fast day God is enough, Psal. 23:1. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. Verse 4. Though I walk through the valley of the

shadow of death I will fear none evil, for thou art with mee, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort mee. Ver. 6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow mee all the days of my life. So Psalm 93:3. The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice, the floods lift up their waves. Psalm 93:4. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea than the mighty waves of the Sea. So Psalm 118:6. The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto mee. Ver. 10. All Nations compassed mee about, but in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them. Ver. 11. They compassed mee about, yea they compassed mee about, but, &c. Ver. 12. They compassed mee about like Bees, they are quenched as the fire of thorns, for in the Name of the Lord, &c. So Psal. 48:14. This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death.

(Sin is a greater trouble, and the world is a greater burden to the weak, then to the strong believer.)

6. The weak believer cannot bring God so much glory as the strong believer.

God hath glory from us many wayes.

By acquitting his fidelity, and truth, and power, and other attributes, Rom. 4:20.

By a bearing and fruitful heart and life, John 15:8.

By thankfull praises and acknowledgement, Psal. 50:23.

Now the weak believer he doth not acquit God so in his Attributes; It is often with him, Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be gracious, or will he be favourable no more? or if thou wilt, thou canst do this for me: He doth not so clearly justifie God in the greatness of his power, in the readiness of his mercy, in the immutability of his truth.

He is not so fruitfull; for where the root is weak, there the branches are not so strong, or full; the fruitfulness of the heart consists in the

rich increase of all graces, and in the enlarged heavenliness of the affections; and the fruitfulness of the life depends upon the inward enriching of the heart, as the streams on the Spring, or the beams on the Sun; and the fruitfulness of both depends upon the richness of faith.

Though the habits of grace depend immediately on Gods Spirit, and not on faith; yet the measures of grace depend (instrumentally) very much on faith, it being the Conduit pipe, that which draws grace for grace from Christ. A weak believer cannot have such a strength of affection, nor vigor of actions as the strong.

He is not so thankfull; you shall for ever find this to be true, that what is a weakening to faith, that is a lessning to thanks. No mans tongue is more in praise then he whose heart is filled with perswasion: God hath but cold thanks from him who is yet disputing and questioning his receipts; where the mercy is fully cleared, there the heart is exceedingly enlarged: But till the soul sees it self indeed a debter, it will prove but an ill and slow pay-master; How can I fully thank God, that he hath expressed that Mirandum of love, to give Christ to me, when yet I do in my soul suspect and question whether this be so or no?

How can I fully bless and praise God for his rich mercy in the pardon of my sins, whiles my soul doth yet suspect that the book is uncrossed, and the controversie of guilt is not yet taken up 'twixt God and me? But where faith is strong, there praise is great; When the Moon is fullest of light, then the tydes are higher in their returns; so the more clear apprehensions of Gods love to us in Christ even raiseth affections to a greater flow of thankfull retributions, Psal. 103:1. Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name. Ver. 2. Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: See how he chargeth and rechargeth his soul to praise; but why? Ver. 3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities. Ver. 4. Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and mercies.

7. The weak Believer will be more puzzled to die then the strong believer. It is with the strong believer as with Simeon who held Christ in his Arms, Now, (said he) lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation: He may easily desire death to let him out of a miserable world, who hath assuredly got, and hath Christ the Author of a better life. Or as with Paul, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better, 2 Cor. 5:1. We know if our earthly house, &c. we have a building of God. For the strong believer knows, that is to him in life and death advantage. By him we shall go to the God of all mercies, and to the Father of all consolations. He shall go to that mansion which his Saviour hath provided, and there have a glorious union with God, and society with Saints for ever. But the weak believer will perhaps stagger, and his heart will divide it self; I would not yet die; if I must, what shall I do? Christ is he whom I have loved and served, but I am not sure that he is mine: Heavenly glory is the wages for our service, but I am not sure that I shall go into it; matters are yet doubtfull, and my heart is yet fearfull, I know not whether such sins are yet taken off, and how will God look upon me if I die, of whose loving favour I have not been assured, whiles I have lived? I hope the best, and yet I see cause to fear; death may do me good, yet I had rather live to clear accounts 'twixt God and my soul, that so then I might give up, &c.

8. The weak believer hath not such cheerfull expectations, nor quiet submissions as the strong believer.

The strong believer is at it as the Church in Micah, My God will hear me; and if he denies a particular good, yet he can sit down and sing; when he is going to prayer he chears up his heart with a confidence on God, and when he finds God determining and revealing his will, there he blesseth God, and follows his calling. But the weak believer is apt to forestall a mercy, he cannot see a plain way for his grant, nor an easily quiet heart after his denial.

9. The efficacy of temptations doth more intangle the weak believer then the strong, like the weaker vessel at sea amidst the greater

waves; Satan doth cousen his soul with ease, and ever and anon disrobes him of his comforts; like a lewd subtile enemy, he forceth the weak believer often to try and clear his title, and increaseth mistakes in all passages 'twixt God and the soul.

1. If he doth cast himself on mercy, then it is presumption; If he holds off, then it is infidelity and rejecting of Christ.

2. If he doubts, then it is despair and a forsaking of God.

3. If he sins, then it is unpardonable, because since knowledge and mercy.

4. If he finds distractions in duty, then this is hypocrisie in the heart.

5. If he meets with hellish suggestions (of which Satan is only the Author) O then, who could be in Christ and have such abominable thoughts!

6. If the Ordinances do not presently comfort, O then, they are sealed up, and there is no faith, else the Word would profit.

7. If every corruption be not subdued in every degree and motion and act, O then, vertue is not gone from Christ, the heart is still naught and the faith unsound.

8. If not the same constant tenor of smart affections, why then there was never any true love of God, no reverence of him now, nor fear, nor duties, but the soul is dead, utterly hardned, and God hath no pleasure in it.

9. If God doth answer the soul, yea but that is but an imagination. If he doth not answer, why then it is clear that God neither doth, nor will ever regard you.

10. If I do not go to the Sacrament, why then thou slightest Christ and his blood: If I go and come away with tears, O then thou wast

unbelieving, or else thou hadst been sent away with joy and increase.

11. If I do not put on for grace, then thou art wicked: If I do put on for grace, then thou art so wicked that God will not bestow it on thee. Thus doth Satan involve, and distress, and set the soul of a weak Believer (like a man at chesse) forward and backward; he makes him to suspect every mercy, and every grace, and every affection, and every duty, and every promise, and every Ordinance; so violently doth he toss, though he cannot totally sink the heart of a weak believer.

SECT. VIII

Motives to strive to greaten thy faith.

1. This a sign of truth. True grace is rising; dead things do moulder, and artificial things remain the same; but the living child is growing to a full stature. Phil. 3. Not as though we had already attained; the grain of mustard-seed grows, and the smoking flax will flame. Presumption hath all its perfections at first.

2. This is a right answer of great means. To whom much is given, of them much is required. Pharaohs lean kine are called ill-favoured, because in a great and large pasture. All is not right when the breasts are full, and the child is still weak. The Gospel should be revealed from faith to faith, Rom. 1.

3. The greater faith is, the greater perfection: every degree of farther grace is like a star of greater magnitude, which differs in glory from another; an addition of faith to faith is an adding to the treasury, an enriching of the soul, a farther clarifying of it. The less of grace, the more of corruption; and the more of corruption, the more of imperfection.

4. The greater faith, the greater comfort; the Mind will have fewer doubts; Will hath fewer fears, Conscience more settledness, the soul

more sights of God, and tastes of Christ, Experiences in life, and confidence in death.

5. The greater faith will be the greater help in times of desertion, in times of tryal, in times of temptation, in times of affliction; and greater help to all active duty, and passive changes. Thou knowest not what may befall thee in evil times: then thou wouldst be able to commit, to submit, to conquer, to suffer, to do much better, if thy faith were much greater.

CHAP. XVI

Exhortations to labour for saving faith

If to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ be the way to be saved; Then be exhorted to labour for, and to get this saving faith. Let not the consolations of God seem small unto thee, said he to job; so say I, let not the salvation of thy soul seem a light thing unto thee. If a man were wounded deeply, and there were but one plaister which could cure, and this were presented unto him, would he not put out his hand to receive and apply it? the love of life would easily incline him.

Why brethren, not a man of us but hath a a deadly wound by sin, and there is no remedy for the sinfull soul but in the blood of Christ: O, if the love of life will constrain us much, let the love of eternal life, the love of our souls, of our salvation perswade us much more to get faith, which gets Christ, who gets salvation for our souls.

There are divers things which I will touch upon in the finishing of this Use, viz.

1. The Motives to perswade and draw the heart to put out for this saving saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The impediments and hindrances, which stop the soul from believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, which we must assay to answer and remove, as he did the body of Asahel which stayed the people in their pursuit.
3. The means or adjuncts, and furtherances to breed this believing quality in the soul.
4. The resolutions or answerings of several doubtfull grounds and arguments which intangle the heart of a sensible sinner, and which he holds out as strong pretences why he should not by faith close with Jesus Christ.

Now that great and holy God, who is the Author of faith, and finisher thereof, whose word is the word of faith, and by whose Almighty working the hearts of men are perswaded to believe, let him so direct me in speaking, and all of us in hearing, that after all his gracious and manifold revelations and offers of our Lord Jesus Christ, our unbelieving hearts may be subdued, and true faith may be wrought in us all to receive the Lord Jesus Christ to our eternal salvation.

SECT. I

First the Motives.

I Speak this day to an understanding and sensible people, to whom the doctrinal parts of our natural misery, and of our purchased felicity are not hidden mysteries, and therefore I trust that the succeeding arguments and motives shall find little stop in your understandings, but shall the more easily and powerfully pass down into your hearts and affections, to perswade and excite you to lay out all your strength and that speedily, to, get this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus then:

First, sadly and seriously consider the state of Positive infidelity. Divines observe a twofold infidelity.

One is Negative, which is amongst the Heathens to whom Christ is not revealed, and therefore they do not believe; it consists both in the absence of the quality of faith, as also in the object and doctrine of faith. This Sun of the Gospel hath not risen unto them, and therefore they sit still in the regions of darkness, and (for ought we know) in the valley of death.

Another is Positive, which is incident unto us Christians, to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed; Christ is manifested as the body of the Sun by the beams of light: so he by the brightness and evidence of the Gospel, and yet the soul knows him not, receives him not, doth no take him both as Lord and Saviour.

Of this there are several degrees; and all of them fearfully dangerous, to speak the truth plainly, damnable.

1. A careless neglecting of the Lord of Life, a not minding of that singular mercy and goodness which God hath treasured in Christ, and reveals and offers to sinfull men.

2. A slighting of him and his excellencies, which is a preferring, as it were, Barabbas before him, a bestowing of our hearts, and studies, and labours, and delights, and services, not on him, but either on our sins, or upon the world, in the rivers of its pleasures, and in the mountains of its profits.

3. A refusing of his Articles and Covenants, which is a breaking off, and vile disliking of those terms upon which he offers himself to be ours: we would bring him to terms of competition with sin, or the creature; we would abridge his holy and Lordly Scepter, like what we please, do what we list, have him to be our Saviour, and sin to be our Ruler, we would bestow our safeties on him, and our services upon the world; we will not freely and fully consent to all that he is, nor submit to all that he proposeth, or may befall us with him and for him: And so like the vain Merchant, we miss the pearl, because we will not go the price: We enjoy our selves still, and our sins, and our world too, but we forsake our mercies for lying vanities: the soul is Christless still, because thus sordidly unbelieving.

1. But then know, of all estates in the world, none so fearfull, so damnable as the unbelieving estate. A man may lose every farthing of his inheritance, and yet faith will bring him to heaven; he may lose every friend that he hath, and yet faith may bring him to heaven; He may lose every spirit in his members, and every drop of blood in his body, and yet faith may bring him to heaven; He may be as poor as Job, as distressed as David, as sick as Lazarus, as forsaken as Paul, as derided as Christ, and yet faith may bring his soul to heaven. But if a man had as much wisdom as Solomon, greatness as Nebuchadnezzar, strength as Sampson, dayes as Methuselah, riches

as Dives; were his dwellings like the doors of the Sanctuary, and shaped into the most imaginable Paradise of all exquisite and earthly delights: if yet his soul remained, and expired unbelieving, if he had not faith, his unbelieving soul shall be cast out into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, Revel. 21:8.

2. Nay again, A man may (perhaps) be guilty of many sins, and those very fowl, high, and crying; he hath perhaps been an Idolater, or else an Adulterer, or else a Blasphemer, or else a Persecutor, yea even of Christ; yet upon his repentance and faith in Christ, his soul shall be saved in the day of the Lord. For no former sins shall prejudice the soul, which is now truly turned from them, and hath by faith yielded up it self to Christ: But the unbelieving person hath every sin and every guilt upon a severe and sure account; he rejects his own satisfactions by refusing Christ: The Law of God will sue him out for every rebellion, and the justice of God will break out upon him for all his iniquities; and conscience will give up all his guilt; and because he is unbelieving, vengeance to the utmost shall seize on him, and there is none to deliver him, nor he ever able to deliver himself. Unbelief it binds all the sins upon the soul, and condemnation fast unto the sins; It leaves the sinning soul naked to the eye of divine Justice, neither hath the soul any shelter which is out of Christ. O thou who wilt not kiss the Son now, who wilt not have Christ to rule thee, who despisest the tender love of God, the precious blood of Christ, who wilt not receive him for thy Priest, for thy Prophet, for thy King; in the last day thou shalt curse thy heart, and accurse thy sins, and cry to the mountains, but they will not cover thee; to mercy, but that will not pitty thee; to Christ, but he will not regard thee; to Justice, but it will not hear thee; thou wouldst not believe, thou wouldst not receive Christ as Lord and Saviour, but thou wouldst have the love of sin, and therefore thou shalt have the portion of a sinner, thou shalt not see life, but the wrath of God shall abide upon thee.

Nay, if the Father hath given and offered unto thee his own Son, and thou harden thy heart by unbelief, thou wilt not take him upon those

terms; I tell thee in the name of the Lord Jesus, that if thou wilt thus bid Christ farewell, thou dost bid God farewell, all mercy farewell, all salvation farewell, all hope of it farewell, and thou bindest all thy sins upon thy soul, and all the curse of the Law upon thy soul; Woe unto thee; its better thou hadst never been born. If thou hast any sense as an ordinary creature, any reason as a man, any understanding as a Christian, any true estimation of an immortal soul, any conceptions of heaven, or hell; if salvation be any comfortable thing, if damnation be any miserable thing; then I beseech thee, I beseech thee, labour for faith, get out of an unbelieving condition; thou perishest if thou stay'st there, thou art lost for ever; he that believes not shall be damned, said the Prince of salvation. O repent and believe, why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Consider, throughly of the love of god in giving Christ, and of the love of Christ in giving himself, and perhaps this may perswade thee to labour for faith.

1. The love of God in giving of Christ. See Job. 3:16 God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

O this love of God to sinners; To give his Son, and not a servant, his own Son, and not another, his only Son, & not a second, his only begotten Son, and not an adopted child, and that not for any ill, but for good; he did not send him as an enemy, but as a friend; not to deliver a poor and mean good, but the best and highest good, to save us; not to deliver us from an ordinary danger, but from condemnation: Yea, and he is sent, and given, he was not sought by us, but given by him: Yea, and no way deserved, but freely given; yea, and given to us, not friends, but enemies.

Thou hast shewed this day (said Saul to David 1 Sam. 24:18.) How that thou hast dealt well with me, for as much as when the Lord had

delivered me into thine hand, thou killest me not. 19. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? Thus here 'twixt man and man: but (saith the Apostle) God commendeth his love towards us, in that whiles we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Now, shall all this love be in vain? shall God think of a Christ and we pass by him? shall he give a Saviour, and we reject him? shall he bring salvation to our doors; and we not accept of it? Why you need my Son, and you are damned, if you take him not, and I freely offer him unto you, that you may be saved, and shall not we strive for faith to receive him?

2. The love of Christ: O, how wonderful was his love to us! it was not a love to the fallen Angels, but to fallen man, and such a love to fallen man as the like cannot be found. He laid aside his glory to do us good; he humbled himself to raise us; he became poor to enrich us; he fasted and prayed and endured the contradiction of sinners, Reproaches, Crucifyings, Wrath, Bloody agonies, Conflicts with Satan, sorrows in his soul, piercings in his body, and a bitter death to satisfie for us, and to reconcile us; and shall we not accept of him? shall all this be in vain? Why! dost thou not hear Christ calling and crying out unto thee, never were any sorrows like my sorrows, never was any love like to my love. O unbelieving and sinning soul! look upon me, why dost thou pass by? why dost thou hide thine eyes from me? why dost thou stop thine ears at me? I am the Saviour of sinners, and there is none else besides me; thy own miseries might cause thee to look up and embrace me; And let my love unto thee a little draw thee, move thee, melt thee. Hast thou not heard of the revilings and scoffs which I sustained? my love to thy soul made me a willing, patient; Hast thou not heard of the agonies of my soul, which made me to sweat drops of blood, and my soul was exceeding heavy even to the death? yet my love to thy soul made me willing to drink that cup: Hast thou not heard of that desertion, and of that wrath which made me to cry out, my God, my god, why hast thou forsaken me? And yet my love to thy soul made me to pass through it: Hast thou not heard of that accursed and despitefull death which I was put to; numbred with transgressors, cast out of the City, nailed to the

Cross, pierced through the heart? and yet my love to thy soul, made me to pour out my soul an offering for thy sins. Why! and shall I veil my glory under the condition of a servant in vain? shall I combat, and conquer Satan in vain? shall I bear the scorn of men, the wrath of God, the terrors of death, the curse of the Law, in vain? was not all this for thee? shouldst not thou have sustained all this; if I had not? and must thou not, if thou refusest him who hath done it? and yet wilt thou prefer thy sins before me? yet wilt thou not accept of me? yet wilt thou not get faith to receive me? have I sought thee freely, bought thee so dearly, and thou neglect and refuse me so easily?

Thirdly, consider, thou hast extream need of a Lord Jesus Christ.

Excellency prevails much with an ingenious nature, and necessity with the worst: when the Lepers saw that they must either venture there lives or die, they would out into the Camp; when the Prodigal saw he must famish abroad, or repair home, he would then back to his Fathers house. Why Brethen! the Captive doth not more need a Redeemer, and the sick doth not more need a Physitian, then the sinner doth need a Christ, and a Saviour.

Were we in Adams created innocency, then we need not to look after a Saviour, but we are fallen, but we are broken, but we are sold under sin, but we are transgressors from the womb; but we are by nature the children of disobedience and Wrath.

Had we any stock left in our hands to set up our broken souls again, had we any strength to repair our loss, to recover our good, to purchase our own peace and salvation, but we are dead in trespasses, Eph. 2:1. we all fall short of the glory of God, Rom. 3:23. we are all without strength, Rom. 5:6.

Could any thing be a Plank to the Shipwreck, but Christ, or an hand to lay hold on the Rock, but faith; then we needed not to give such diligence for faith to believe: but there is no salvation in any other name, and there is no quality but faith to get us into Christ.

It is not the confidence which thou maist put upon the faith of another, which will do it: as every mans soul is for his own body, so every man faith is for his own soul; the wise Virgins had no more Oil then would serve their own Lamps; and no mans faith is more then enough for himself: Though Christ can save many, yet faith saves him only who hath it.

It is not the confidence of a naked decree which will do it, If God hath decreed to save me, I shall be saved; O no, his decrees are his own secret wayes; and the way which he hath opened to us, is to get faith and to believe in his Son.

It is not an empty profession, nor the worthless access of all the creatures that can ensure or save thy soul. Only Christ, none but Christ; thou art wounded, and Christ is thy plaister; thou art dead, and Christ is thy life; thou art sold and Christ is thy ransome; thou art an enemy, and Christ is thy peace. The debts are infinite, the curse great, the justice of God pure, thy strength nothing, and nothing satisfies and delivers but Christ, and none hath Christ but the believer; why then wilt thou not labour for faith?

Fourthly consider, Christ is every way fitted to thy need: Why Brethren, gold will ransome a debtor to man, it will not ransome a sinner from the Law, an offender against God. Why look upon your need aright, and then judge, who but Christ for a sinner.

There is guilt, much guilt lying upon thy soul, and who is the Priest to suffer, to offer, to satisfie, to take away transgressions but Christ? None can blot out the guilt of sin for us, but he who had not a spot of sin in himself.

There is filth, much filth defiling our natures, poysoning our actions; and who is the Prophet to enlighten, to teach, to change, to cleanse from sinfulness but Christ? None can teach us holiness, and obedience, but he who was Holy, undefiled, separated from sinners and was obedient to the death.

There is dominion, much dominion of sin, prescribing a Law to our members, sending out all insolent inclinations, holding us in a willing subjection to every base lust; and who is the King to conquer the heart, to subdue iniquities, to lead captivity captive, to spoil principalities and power, to bid the captive go free, to erect a throne of righteousness and peace in the soul but Christ? So that the wise love of God hath prepared and fitted Christ in all respects suitable to the exigencies, and straits of a sinfull soul, and hath appointed faith to be that which shall put on this Christ upon the needy soul; why then will we not labour for faith;

Fifthly, God hath not only fitted a Saviour for thee, but he comes neer unto thee with him, he deals mightily with thy soul to believe on him.

Thou hast the word of revelation (to this very day) wherein the mysterie of thy salvation is made known and clear unto thee. Thou needest not to say in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deeps to bring up Christ again from the dead? But the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is the word of faith which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, Rom. 6:7, 8, 9.

Thou hast the word of gracious proposition; God hath offered Christ with all his plentiful redemption, with his strong salvation unto thee: yea, he hath assured thee by his Word of truth (which cannot lie nor deceive) that if thou believest on him, thou shalt be saved by him.

Thou hast the word of injunction which layes a bond of duty upon thee, This is his Commandment, that we believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.

Nay, thou hast the word of penalty and correction. God hath said that he will judge thee for not believing, and that in the sharpest method of expression, He that believes not shall be damned.

Nay, thou hast the word of obsecration and gentle intreaty; God stoops infinitely below himself, he doth strein curtesie with thee, God doth beseech you by us, and we pray you in Christs stead to be reconciled to God.

Nay thou hast the word of expostulation; why will you not believe? why will ye die in your sins? why will ye not come to me that you may be saved? How often would I have gathered thee? All the day long have I stretched forth my hands.

Nay, thy unbelief grieves the very heart of Christ, (he grieved at their unbelief) he complains of that slowness in the heart to believe (O slow of heart to believe,) &c, nay, and he sheds tears, because thou dost not believe and receive him; When he came near the City, he wept over it, O Hierusalem! thou that, &c. How often would I, &c.

Sixthly, consider how unreasonable, and unequal, and sottish a thing it is not to receive Christ, being thus revealed and offered.

1. There is none who have right to thy soul but God and Christ; our souls are Gods workmanship, and Christs purchase; Why then should we not give to God that which belongs to God, and to Christ that which is his own; Ye are not your own, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. for ye are bought with a price. God put forth his own power to make thy soul, and Christ shed his heart blood to redeem thy soul, and yet wilt thou through infidelity with-hold it from him, and pass it over into the possession of a stranger, an enemy?

2. Christ out-bids all Merchants for thy soul, he out-bids sin, and he out-bids all the world, and he out-bids Satan. Can the Son of Jesse give you vineyards, said Saul? can sin give thee that which Christ can? can the world? let them now appear and declare their strength and treasury; Is there any one of them that presents redemption unto

thee? Is there any one of them that can procure remission and pardoning mercy for thee? Is there any one of them which can satisfie the wrath of God for thee? which can make thy peace? which can present thee righteous before the judgement seat? which can settle eternal life upon thee? All this can Christ do, none of this can they do.

3. Thou canst not possibly be a loser by receiving or believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Suppose it cost thee many tears, and many prayers, and many searchings, and many waitings, yet Christ will recompence all these in a moment, one word, I am thy salvation; It is I, be not afraid; I am thine, as thou art mine, thy sins are forgiven thee, will be a day for all former nights.

Suppose that the world doth cast thee off, as they cast him out of the Synagogue who believed and professed Christ, yet Christ will come unto thee as unto him; And as Elkanah said to Hanna, 1 Sam. 1:8. Am not I better then ten Sons? or as the Prophet answered the King for the hundred talents, God will be better unto thee, 2 Sam. 20:9. So will Christ, he will supply all thy losses, he will be better unto thee then houses and lands, then father and mother, an hundred-fold better in this life, and a thousand-fold better in the life to come.

4. What just extremity of shame and blackness of confusion will befall thee, if thou be so wickedly unreasonable to keep off thy soul from Christ. When thou art cited before God and Christ, and the holy Angels and just men, and God shall demand of thee, why, whom hast thou served? upon whom hast thou bestowed thy soul? who was it that made thy soul? Thou Lord; who was it that purchased and redeemed thy soul? Thou Christ; and who beseeched thee to bring back thy soul? Thou by thy servants in thy Word; And what did they say unto thee, which should have prevailed upon thee? They did assure me in thy Name, that if I would come in, and accept of Christ, I should have favour, and pardon, and eternal life; and what did keep

back thy soul from accepting of this? O it was such a lust that I loved, and it was the world which I preferred. And wouldest thou prefer earth before heaven, thy profit before thy soul? nay wouldst thou prefer a base sin before a mercifull God, and a blessed Redeemer? Thy own mouth doth testifie against thee; was not my mercy better then a sin? was not my Son better then a sin? take him all ye children of darkness, seize on him my wrath to the utmost, close him up in the lowest pit of hell, conscience gnaw on him, and sting him for ever, fire and brimstone consume and torment him eternally, he shall never have part in my mercy; he shall never have portion in my Son; He shall never see my face nor heaven, who preferred his sin, his delights, his profits, before my love, my mercy, my Christ, and his own soul.

Lastly, faith would do great things for thee, and Christ would do wonders for thy soul, if once thy heart could be perswaded to consent unto him, and to accept of him as Lord and Saviour.

SECT. II

Secondly, the impediments and hinderances.

Obj. But now, as the Eunuch said, There is water, what hinders me that I may not be baptized? so you may say, why? here is Christ set out to the life; here are arguments fair enough to draw on my soul; what hinders that we do not believe and receive Christ?

Sol. After all these discoveries, yet the heart stands off; and why? because there are yet many cords with which the soul is held; there are yet several impediments which do intangle and seduce the heart, which keep it down from mounting and rising up to the Lord of life, against which we must earnestly labour if ever we would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I will touch some of the choisest of them.

1. One impediment to faith is that natural Atheism in the sons of men. You know that as in the concoction or digestion of meats, that which is a prejudice to the first concoction or digestion of meats, is a hindrance to the two other, and as in points of demonstration, that scruple which weakens the apprehension of the truth of the principle; it ever disables the strength of assent to the deduced conclusion: So is it in divinity; whatsoever vile quality in the soul prejudiceth the reverent respects of the most common and first truths, it doth hinder it much in the embracing of the depending truths, which receive much authority and strength from the grants of the former.

Now Atheism, it is a slighting quarrel with the first truths: An Atheistical spirit, it hath most sordid and loose conceptions of God and of his word; it doth not set up God in the greatness of his nature, and Majesty of his Attributes, and Authority of his Word; God looks not like a God unto him; nor doth the Word of God work upon him like the Word of God. God is not in all his thoughts, he doth not really conceive of him, as one who indeed is omnipotent, and so holy, and so just, and so mercifull as he reveals himself: Those sweet truths of favour, and kindness, and mercy, and the blood of Christ, they are either nothing to him, or as empty notions. Those sharp threatnings against an unbelieving person, with condemnation, and wrath, and hell, they are as terrible fables and scarcrowes to him; He doth not believe any such displeasures, nor torments, that thus it shall be indeed. Now how can the soul be inclined to believe in Christ, to part with its dear lusts, with its worldly advantages and pleasures, and to submit it self to the Laws and Scepter of Christ, when as it doth expresly or vertyually deny the nature of God, and the power of his truths?

Didst thou indeed believe that there was a God; didst thou indeed believe that his revelations of mans sinful misery, and of his singular mercy in Christ were true and real; didst thou believe that God hath wrath, and blackness of darkness, and vials of vengeance for ever to be poured on the unbeliever; and that the lake which burns with fire

and brimstone must be thy assured portion, (as God hath spoken) how couldst thou sit still, content thy heart, neglect thy salvation by Christ, stand off from the wayes and endeavours for faith?

Therefore to remove this impediment, beg of God to forgive and cure the Atheism of thy Spirit. Strive to set up the true God in thy understanding, and to believe that he is the Lord who will not lye. Whatsoever he hath revealed himself to be and to do, why that he is, and that he will perform; that it is thy duty to return from sin to him in Christ, and if thou dost return, he will in mercy spare and deliver thy soul from the pit, because he hath found a ransome; but if thou wilt not return, he will bathe the sword of his flaming justice for ever in the blood of thy soul.

2. A second impediment to the getting of faith is gross ignorance. Whatsoever is contrary to knowledge, that same is contrary to faith; for though faith sees not its ground in natural reason, yet it must have divine evidence to shew it its object, and way, and causes, or else it cannot be wrought in the soul.

The soul must have light for all its apprehensive operations, for the eye to see, and the understanding to perceive, and for the heart to embrace.

Now this is it which keeps men off from believing; they are extreemly ignorant.

1. First, of their own sinful condition; they do not know their nativity and conception, what sin is, nor what belongs to sinners; how abominable and vile their natures are, without all good, and like a fountain full of all wickedness; how dead in trespasses and sins; how totally defiled, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot; How perpetually rebellious against every precept of heaven, and how slighting of the tenders of salvation and mercy.

2. Secondly, of Gods just disposition towards the sinful person. They see him not armed, and setting out against them in all the

threatnings and curses of his Law; as Balaam in his passage he adventured on, for he saw not the Angel of the Lord with a sword in his hand ready to cleave him asunder: so men rest securely in their natural state; talk what you will of Christ, and of God, and of sin, and of faith, they are not moved; they know not the fearfull issues of a natural and unbelieving condition, they know not that God will judge them and condemn them for ever.

3. Thirdly, of the excellencies of Christ what he is, whither God, or man, or both, even as it pleaseth him; but savourly what he is in respect of his Natures, in respect of his Offices, in respect of his Actions, in respect of his Passion, in respect of his Benefits, in respect of his Vertues, they understand not these things. How God hath manifested love in Christ, how Christ manifested love to them, to what end he was made man, why Ministers preach him so much, what is more in him then in any other; Alas they think not of these things, they know them not. Now brethren, how is it possible for the soul to believe, or to be perswaded to believe in Christ, or to labour for this precious faith which is a stranger to it self, to God, to Christ?

Didst thou indeed know thy condition to be the condition of death, wouldst thou not make out for the Lord of life? didst thou indeed know thy condition to be the condition of enmity, wouldst thou not strive to get unto the Prince of peace?

So again, as Christ spake to the woman, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water, John 4:10. O if men did know what a gift Christ was; If heaven and earth, men and Angels had studied the helps of a poor sinner, they could never have imagined such a remedy as God found in giving his own Son. Now, if men did know him aright, what a Redeemer, what a Lord he is, what living water is in him: That in him only there is life for the dead, recovery for the sinner, satisfaction for guilt, sanctification for the soul, atonement for trespasses, comfort for distresses, balm for wounds, salvation for their persons: why,

how could it be but that they should ask of him for a drop (at least) of water, for some faith to receive him who is the fountain of grace and life!

3. A third impediment to the endeavours for faith, is a vain confidence of natural righteousness: This was it which kept off many of the Pharisees; the Text saith, That they trusted to their own righteousness. Yea, this is called the stumbling of the Jews; it cast them flat, that they doted so on legal abilities. When a base heart hath proud imaginations of Christ; and peace and safety from something within it self, why, it will never look after Christ. A proud person who hath money in his house, he scorns to be beholding to his neighbour; the proud sinner, who conceives that all is well 'twixt him and God, and that he hath done no man wrong, and none can say black is his eye, he is neither whore nor thief, and his heart is as good as the best, and his meanings are alwayes honest, and none can tax him for injustice, and he hath kept all Gods Commandments as well as ever he could, and he hath had a good belief, (he thanks God) ever since he was born: I tell you such a person will not be beholding to God for Christ; for he (in his opinion) being so whole, needs not the Physician, neither shall you perswade him to mourn for his sins, or to repent, and to part with all for Christ, to deny himself and all his own vain confidences, and to put himself only upon Jesus Christ; he trusts to be saved by his good deeds, and by his good meanings.

Ah foolish and seduced soul! Who hath bewitched thee to forsake thine own mercies? Thinkest thou that God would have sent his only Son, and to pour out his own soul for sinners, if that yet there had been ability in sinfull man to have purchased his own safety and happiness? And dost thou see no sin in thy self, which may therefore for ever thrust thee off from resting upon thy self? and are thy works such absolute bottoms and foundations, when the Heathens can match them and exceed them? or cannot God espy a flaw in thy Ship, and much false conveyance in thy title, and much defect in thy deeds, who can charge folly upon the Angels? And are thy meanings and works so good, while thy heart is yet so ignorant, thy life yet so

prophane? Can what thou dost, find acceptance or merit, when yet thou trustest not on him who only is the merit for a sinner? Thinkest thou thy meanings can be good, which dishonour the Redemption by Christ, and the freeness of mercy? O no my brethren, the soul is the passenger, graces are the sails, the spirit is the wind, but Christ, only Christ is the bottom which carries all safe and sure to heaven.

Nay, if thou canst see a Saviour in thy own good meanings; if a Saviour in thy own good works, a Saviour in any part or degree of inherent righteousness, either inward, for the change of nature, or outward for the emprovement of life; this, this will keep thee and Christ asunder. No man will labour for faith in Christ, who hath a faith in himself already as his own Saviour. Therefore as they in the Acts of the Apostles, burned their books when they came to believe in Christ, so must we unbottom our selves of our selves. Renounce our menstrous rags, abhor our selves in dust and ashes, lie flat before the mercy-seat, cry out with the Leper, I am unclean, unclean; with Daniel, To us belongs nothing but confusion, for we have sinned; with David, Enter not into judgement with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no flesh righteous be justified; with the Publican stand afar off, and say, Lord be mercifull to me a sinner; with Paul, I count all things but as dung and drosse in comparison of Christ, and I desire to be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is of faith; with those Elders cast (if we had them) our very crowns to the earth before the Lamb, and say he only is worthy.

If ever thou wouldst get to believe in Christ, labour to get the mountains to be levelled, the high imaginations to be cast down, to cast thy self out of thy self: There is nothing that I have been, or have done, or do, or can do, which I can trust to; I seek for the living among the dead, whiles I look for a Saviour in my self. He is farr enough from safety, who rests on the arm of his flesh, and we shall never close with, or magnifie Christs righteousness until we can (in matter of merit or justification) deny our own.

4. A fourth impediment to believing is, the league of the heart with sin: Light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, John 3:19. Sin absolutely doth not prejudice the contract of the soul with Christ; for Christ doth not negotiate for any soul, but the sinful soul; He doth not come to a person, and say, If thou hast no sin, I will bestow my self on thee; or if thou hast not committed sin, I will be a redeemer, a Saviour unto thee. O no, the offer of Christ is only to the sinner, and it is none but the sinner who is to believe in Christ. But that which hinders the contract 'twixt men and Christ, it is the love of sin; Christ comes in the Ministry of the Gospel unto us, and reports unto us our own exceeding sinfulness, and then his exceeding graciousness, and invites the soul (by many sweet and tender arguments) to accept of him to be Lord and Christ, and assures of it pardon and righteousness and salvation. Now faith Christ, that which I require of you is this, leave but your sins, your sins which will damn you, and I will be yours. Why, saith the soul, this is but reason, and I will hearken to it; well then saith Christ, go and quit such a lust, thy uncleanness, or thy Sabbath-breaking, or thy drunkenness, or thy lewd society, &c. Why, now the base and foolish heart falls off, I cannot live without my nature, I must and will be allowed in such a course. The heart riseth up, O, Benjamin shall not go, nay any thing but this lust, I will never be divorced from it; if I may have Christ and this sin too, well and good. Thus the love of sin steals away the heart, it bestows the heart elsewhere, nay it inflames an opposition against the Lordly power of Christ; the soul will never yield to the dominion of Christ, which delights in the subjection to sin.

Brethren, if we could but rip up the secrets of mens hearts unto you, you should clearly discern, that it is the love of some sin or other which mars all; men oft-times can make no exception against Christ, they see reason enough to come in unto him; they know they cannot be saved without him; but then they will not leave their sins, it cuts their souls to think of such a divorce; come on it what will, they will take their pleasure, and hold fast their wickedness.

5. A fifth impediment is the world: The honours of it; how can you believe who receive honour one from another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? John 5:44. The profits of it; He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions, Mat. 19:22. The Examples of it, Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? John 7:48. The terrors of it, the fear of the Jews kept off many from coming to Christ. The losses of it, and crosses; He that will be my Disciple must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. The cares and thoughts of it, when a man minds earthly things, and will be rich, and devours all his precious thoughts, to compass that which will be but a feather, a thorn, vanity or vexation. Press men to labour for Christ, why, we have no leisure: press to frequent the ways of getting faith, why, we must not neglect our callings. Urge them to embrace Christ as Lord, to shape and fashion their hearts and ways according to his rules, after his righteous Laws, and to deny themselves in some sinfull compliances, O then we shall not be esteemed of, we shall be derided and scoffed at as vain and singular.

O these sensible things, which we can see with our eyes, and grasp with our hands, they put us off from the great moments of our best and eternal good.

And what are the honours of this world, but as the shade of the Sun which every discontented cloud and frown removes? and what are the profits of it, but heaps of chaff, which any wind from heaven may scatter? and what are the friends of it, but a gourd, which any worm may gnaw out and shrivel?

And why dost thou fear man, whose utmost power exceeds not thy body, and fearest not that God whose vengeance can seize on thy soul? and why wilt thou bestow the strength of thy time, to get no more then nothing, and in the mean time to lose eternity, a soul, a Christ, a heaven? yet thus it is; the poor creatures (at the best) but our servants have got our hearts, whiles Christ complains against us; we withhold our souls from him, our just Lord and best Master.

But if there were not more glory in Christ, then honour in the world; if there were not more gain in Christ, then profit in the world; if there were not more love in Christ, then friendship in the world; if there were not more comfort in Christ, then discouragements in the world; if there were not more safeties in Christ, then dangers in the world; nay, if the real and true exceedings of infinite betterness were not on Christs part, I durst not so to encline your hearts for faith in him, &c.

6. Sixthly, the cunningings of natural unbelief, are a great impediment; I will not speak of all of them; only I will discover a few, all which are hindrances.

1. Imaginations of impossibility: it cannot be, that if I should labour for faith, that ever I should get it; the intentions of mercy lie not that way, nor do the streams of graciousness run toward such a deeply sinful and guilty soul, my sins are grown to such a vastness of provocation as if all the Angels in heaven should be sent unto me, I could never credit their relation of hope or peace unto me.

Now when the heart is thus fore-stalled with a strength of conceit that God never did, nor will bend the curement of the blood of Christ towards the soul; why, the hands sink; no man will be perswaded to compass impossibilities.

2. Apprehensions of difficulty. Unbelief sets up a Lyon in every path, and so keeps off from all endeavour: First, I shall never be able to spare time, I shall never be able to pray, I shall never be able to keep on in such a course, I shall never be able to leave such society, I shall never be able to deny the world, I cannot take such pains, I cannot wait, I cannot tell how to get off these sins, to change this heart, to bring it to yield to Christ.

3. Discourse of carnal reasonings, which try all the promises of God at a humane bar; disputings against just precepts by unjust practices; and the undertakings of a great and a faithful God, by the

shallowness of a blind and proud and weak understanding, throwing up infinite exceptions.

4. Instances of sense and feeling; Why, if a man will judge of God, by what he always hears and feels within himself, he shall never believe.

Yea, if I were now sure I should have mercy, that Christ were mine, that my sins were pardoned, if I could see my heart changed, and sins dispersed and subdued, then I would put out for faith, and then I would look up to Christ. And wouldst thou have thy cure before thy plaister, thy health before the physick, thy life before thy soul, the portion before the person, thy nonefast before thy meal, the benefits of Christ, the vertues of Christ, before Christ himself?

SECT. III

Thirdly the means.

Now I come to direct you unto the use of such means by which God works this saving faith in the hearts of men.

Where, premise with me some particulars.

1. There is no natural power in man to produce a cause within himself; This great grace of faith is no fruit of the wisdom of the flesh, nor is it the birth of a corrupt will; if it were possible for a natural heart to see all the excellencies of Christ, if it were possible for him to draw out and behold all the arguments of Scripture, yet could he not by his own strength make his own heart to believe.

2. The immediate and sole cause of faith is the Spirit of God: He it is who is greater then the heart. and who can perswade, and draw the heart, and who can change and renew the spirit, which till it be renewed by him, will never be moved to believe in Christ.

3. There are means appointed by God, and which God doth ordinarily bless, for the production of faith; as he hath ordained means, for the revelation of Christ; so he hath likewise consecrated means to lead the soul unto him, to implant faith.

4. Now the great and ordinary means by which God works faith in the hearts of men (I speak of such as are come to ripeness of years) is the preaching of the Word.

So Acts 13:48. When the Gentiles heard his, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed, Rom. 10:17. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, Eph. 1:13. In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation.

That the Word is the Ministerial instrument, which God useth to beget faith in Christ, may thus appear.

1. It is that which discovers unto the soul its extream misery and great need of Christ; nothing quickens the conscience to that reflexive evidence, to the clear and true sight of the natural state, which pricks the soul, which in a sort compels the soul to look after the Redeemer of the world, as the word doth. You see it hath been thus formerly, that when men have heard it, it hath unfolded their state unto them, it hath broken all their proud imaginations, it hath driven them to their feet, it hath made them to cry out, Men and brethren what shall we do to be saved?

Yea and we find it in experience to be so, that the preaching of the Word, it opens the eyes of sinners, it frames in them the sense of sinfulness, and accursedness, it makes them indeed to feel the need of a Physician of such an one as Christ.

2. It is that which discovers a shoar for a broken ship; which doth reveal, and proclaim to poor sinners Articles of peace in Christ; it makes known the great love of God and Christ; and how that Christ

is the Son of God, and was sent by God, and satisfied for sinners, and this was accepted.

3. It makes the soul to confess those things as most true and good in themselves: It convinceth a man, that of a truth God means graciously to men, that his Son was a Sacrifice, was a propitiation, that he did purchase pardon and salvation for sinners.

4. It is that which casteth down all the reasonings, arguments and disputes of the mind against the conditions of Christ, and renders all the terms of Christ upon which he will be taken, as most equal, and fair, and reasonable.

5. It is that which clears the way for the soul against all its fears and unbelieving doubts, from the freeness of Gods mercy, from the fulness of Christs redemption, from the willingness on Christs part, and requests unto us to accept of him.

6. It is that which doth powerfully renew the disposition of the understanding and will, and so incline them to esteem of Christ as the highest truth, and to bend after him as the chiefest good.

7. It is that which stirs up the heart with a choice of Christ, and resolution to have him what ever may befall it.

8. It is that which makes the heart to cry fervently to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to work his blessed grace of faith: Yea, which draws out of us strong supplications with many tears and longings, and to implead all the promises of making mercy good, and Christ good, and faith good unto us.

9. It is that which establisheth the soul to a patient expectation for ever to lie at the pool, for ever to attend the doors of the Sanctuary, till the soul can take and close with Christ by true believing.

But then to open unto you the way more distinctly, I would commend this course unto a person, that he may at length get a believing heart.

1. Study thy natural condition thoroughly. The right sense of this, though it doth not formally cause faith, yet it may have a compelling force to make us look after Christ, and to strive for faith.

The Apostle calls the Law a Schoolmaster to Christ, Gal. 3. why? because it doth reveal such a smart and strong evidence of the sinfull condition, that it scourgeth a man out of himself to look for a Saviour; yea, it helps much to cast the proud soul down, and to break and crush his natural bottom; which otherwise would stave off, and hinder a man from believing. Therefore study thy natural condition: O I would believe, and I would have Christ: yea, but why? what need seest thou in thy self of him? I tell you that the more desperate the soul sees its own natural condition, the more willingly may it be drawn to apprehend, adore, and embrace its remedies and safeties.

Now there are three things to convince our selves of, about our natural condition, I mean the state without Christ.

1. First, the ugly vileness of it. That it is sinful and stark naught; it is no such thing as God doth like or approve, but his soul abhors and hates it. For it is compounded of nothing but want of good, and inclination to evil, to all that is opposite to God and holiness; That thou art in it, poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked, an ignorant, opposing, unconceiving creature of any spiritual good; proud, and sensual, and vain, and earthly, loathsome and dead.

2. Secondly, the sure and fearfull misery of it: Thou art without God, without Christ, without the Covenant; not a drop of mercy for thee, whiles thou remain'st thus; but all the wrath of God is against thee, and thou art under the dominion of sin, and terrible curse of the Law; all the threanings in the Book of God are ever ready to seize on thee; and how soon may they arrest thee, if God gives them commission?

3. Thirdly the utter insufficiency to deliver thy self out of this state: Thou art never able to merit the least mercy, nor to answer the great

justice of God; Though thou shouldst offer thousands of lambs, and ten thousand rivers of oyl; thou art so totally broken in thy strength, that thou canst not pay a farthing, and never canst thou be a Redeemer to thy self, from thy sins, or Gods justice.

Now drive and fasten these things as real and experimental truths into thy heart, till thou are shut up under sin, as the Apostle speaks, Gal. 3. (that is) so convinced on all sides concerning thy natural self, that thou art fain to fall down and cry out, O Lord, I am unclean, I am unclean; I am unclean, a miserable wretch, a lost person for ever, unless thou shew great compassion to my poor soul; This condition is deadly and barren, I am full of sin and without strength; and this condition is so fearfull, that verily I will not rest in it; Men and brethren, what shall I do to be saved? Is there no balm in Gilead for a wounded soul? no City of refuge for a distressed sinner? no Rock of safety for a shipwrackt person? no hope of salvation yet left for me?

2. Then study the hope of a sinful soul. Why, though thou hast been very wicked, and hast exceeded in transgressions; yet there may be hope. The Gospel it is the Cape of good hope, it is that which thrusts out some sight of land to a tossed sinner; It is a message from heaven, proclaiming both the hope and possibility, and also the way and method of salvation for a sinful person: Look, as the Law points out a way of salvation for a righteous and innocent man, so the Gospel doth for an offending and sinful man. Therefore study it much, take some accurate pains to be thoroughly and really informed and convinced, what Gods dispositions are therein revealed towards sinners.

Now here are two things which I would commend.

1. One is the study of Christ; Study him all over; perhaps thou maist see that in him, which may answer many, yea all thy fears. Perhaps thou maist see so much in him as may win much upon thy heart, to come in and accept of him by faith.

Therefore peruse him well. First, that he is God and man, and as so, a Mediator, and because so, therefore an Almighty, and a compassionate Redeemer. Secondly, that it proceeds from the love and Counsel of God to give him to be the Saviour of sinners. God did see the fallen state and great misery of man, and his absolute insufficiency to recover himself; and therefore his own love moved him to give his own Son in whom he did ordain the salvation of sinners. Thirdly, that Christ was willing to become a Mediator, yea, he did freely give his life to make peace and procure salvation; and this sacrifice of his was both acceptable and effectual. Fourthly that God would have thee to come unto him for life, and that Christ is the surety, and Mediator, and only hope of sinners. Fifthly, that Christ hath in him all, and enough to make up thy state, and to reconcile thee and God, and to get full pardon, and to present thee righteous, and to procure for thee eternal life. Sixthly, that Christ seeks even after thee by the Ministry of the Gospel, and both offers himself with all his purchase unto thee, and hath, and yet doth beseech thee to accept of him: I say, study these things; who knows how the great studies of Christ may be at length blessed with faith in Christ? This I am sure of, that the ignorance of the nature and offices, and works, and benefits, and alssufficiency, and marvelous affections, and readiesses in Christ is a notable strength to unbelief. Ergo, on the contrary, the knowledge of them is a good means for faith.

2. Another is the study of the new Covenant: Why, what mayest thou not there see to draw on thy soul to Christ? yea, what arguments doth God there fill thy mouth with to conquer himself? He gives thee in that Covenant, ample and prevailing grounds by which thou maist with an humble confidence even plead with him for Christ and faith: Thou shalt see there all thy good set freely open, that God stands not for this, nor for that, and it matters not what thou hast been; there is mercy enough for what is past, and there is grace to renew thy heart for the present, and strength for the future, and thou maist sue out the Lord for this faith (of which we now speak) and he will surely give it unto thee.

3. Study the main hinderances of distance 'twixt Christ, and the Covenant, and thy soul. There is one thing (above all the rest) which keeps thee off, and that is unbelief: For God doth not require any other thing of thee in the entrance of Christ, but only to accept of him. He doth not say, if thou hadst never offended me, then I would have bestowed my Son on thee; or, if thou hadst not offended me so much, or if thou canst bring any singular nature, and excellent qualities of thine own, then I will give my Son unto thee, or then I will give thee leave; No, but all that he requires is this, Believe and accept of my Son to be thy Lord and Saviour, and I will in him give thee pardon.

Why, now brethren, this is the last and sore check of the match, our hearts are unbelieving, we will not condescend to this condition, but fly hovering after some unknown and devised method of our own.

4. Study much the sinfulness of unbelief: that it is a sin, and a great sin, and that in thee: What! after all sense of misery to hold off from remedy; not to close with Gods great love, as if God were not wise enough to shew thee the way of salvation, or as if he were not true, that thou darest not to venture and fasten thy soul, and state upon his Word.

5. Study well wherein the nature of faith doth consist: Many persons seem to complain that they have no faith, and cannot believe: Why? they are not right in the doctrinal part of faith, they mistake faith exceedingly, thinking it to consist in a full assurance, and in a sensible taste of Gods love in Christ, and in a sensible and clear perswasion that their sins are pardoned, which, because as yet they never had, they therefore perplex themselves much about faith.

Therefore inform thy self what faith in Christ is; It is the hearty accepting of Christ upon his own conditions; if thy heart and soul are willing to accept of Christ as the only Lord to rule thee, and as the only Redeemer to save thee, and to cleave unto him for better for worse, through all the changes which may befall thee for Christs

sake, why this faith, viz. An accepting of his person, and a reposing of the soul upon him for its safety, and a cleaving to him upon all states; if thou canst find thus much, that there is no one sin which shall rule thee, to the love and obedience of which thou wilt resign thy self, but Christ is he whom thou choosest for to be thy Lord; And there is no Name in heaven and earth upon which thou wilt put confidence for thy righteousness and discharge, and salvation, but only in Christ; and upon him thy soul entirely and unfeignedly desires to rest it self, thou hast true faith.

6. Know this and convince thy self of it, that thou shalt never hurt thy self, nor offend God if thou couldst believe; wherefore hath God given Christ? and wherefore hath Christ given himself? and wherefore is he now offered to sinners? and wherefore are we commanded to believe, if yet to believe (that is) to accept of Christ, to consent to the acceptance of his person upon his own condition were a sin?

7. Withal this beg fervently of God, that he would perswade thy heart to believe (that is) to accept of Christ to be thy Lord and Saviour, and to rest thy soul upon him: No man comes to me (saith Christ) except the Father draw him. Now then, O Lord draw me, and I shall run after thee; O subdue this unbelieving heart, and give unto me the spirit of faith, and love and obedience.

Lastly, look for this gift of faith to be wrought in thee by the Spirit of Christ in the Ordinances, and wait upon God there continually. Thou shalt in time (perhaps sooner, perhaps later) find thy soul touched, and thy fears answered, and thy soul made exceedingly willing to accept of Christ as thy Lord, and to put it self upon him as thy Saviour.

Yea, hold on in waiting and seeking, and thou shalt not only have Christ formed in thee, and faith formed in thee, but thou shalt come to know him, whom thou hast accepted and trusted.

This is a sweet and safe course for a sensible sinner, viz.

1. To present up his request unto God in the Name of Christ, earnestly beseeching him to declare this almighty working of his Spirit in causing the heart to believe.
2. Then to stand in the wayes of grace, and come to the Ordinances wherein God doth reveal his arm, and give faith, and so enclines and unites the soul with Christ. What thou dost earnestly seek in a private way, that God doth ordinarily answer and bestow in a publick.
3. Then wait and expect, not to limit God just to this time, nor to this Preacher, nor to cast off all confidence of answer, upon present denyals, but to look up from day to day, from week to week, if at length God will give thee faith. I never read or heard of any whose hearts were thus set, but God hath found a time to give unto them the desires of their souls: He hath replenished their souls with his salvation and loving kindness: Therefore go on cheerfully in the use of these means; whatsoever befalls thee, yet it shall be well with thee; He that hath found Christ cannot but say, that this way is good; and he who is thus seeking of him shall say, it was not in vain to follow it.

SECT. IV

Fourthly, The Objections.

Now I proceed to the resolution of those Scruples which do intangle the soul of a sinfull sinner, and hinder him from believing, which beget extream fears and doubts, that he may not lay hold on Christ, and that God will never bestow Christ on him, neither would he take it well of the soul to be so busie and forward.

Obj. 1. Why, saith the sensible sinner, my sinnings have been so great, and transgressions so mighty, that I may never look up with any confidence upon the rock of salvation; nay, it is not Satan only, but my own conscience which doth testifie against me, the manifold

numbers, and the high exceedings of my rebellions. I tell you, you would tremble to think of such lewdness whereof I have been and now do stand guilty; and the sensible consideration of them makes my heart to sink, and checks me with shame and blushing, when I think of laying hold on Christ.

Sol. For the assoyling of this Objection, consider these particulars.

2. First, the greatness of sinning should be a strong reason to compell in the soul to Christ: Great sinnings are never eased, either by despair, or by unbelief: But two things they should cause. 1. One is great humblings, and sorrow. 2. Another is great desires and beseechings for Christ. Suppose a man owed his whole estate, his only way was to beg a whole discharge; suppose a man had many wounds, and deep ones too, for this reason should he go to the Chyrurgion.

Why Brethren! what would you alone do with great sinnings: Can you ever discharge them? can you ever satisfie for them? Nay, do they not open unto thee thy great need of Christ, and point the way to him? 1. God hath greater mercies then we sins. 2. Christ hath stronger merits, and satisfactions to the utmost. 3. Greater sins should hasten us into the mercy-seat, the greater wounds to the Physician. 4. The greatest sinners, when humbled, have been accepted and pardoned; Manasses, Mary Magdalene, Paul. Some great sinners have miscared, because they never came to Christ.

6. Hadst thou less sins, wouldst thou not come in? Why then? &c.

7. The greatest sinner never miscarried by coming to Christ; and the least sinner doth, for not coming to Christ. Thy not coming to Christ binds all thy sins on thy soul.

2. Thy unbelief is a worse sin then all the rest: and that shall appear unto thee thus.

First, it is a refusal of all thy remedy; as if it were a small thing to provoke Justice, thou dost now provoke mercy too.

Secondly, it is that which besides its own guilty qualities keeps also all the former guilts upon thy account: every sin that thou hast committed heretofore, it doth keep its stings, its accusation, its force against thee if thou wilt not believe; so that this can be neither safety, nor wisdom for thee to hold off because of the greatness of thy sins.

3. Christ is a great Saviour: He is called a mighty Saviour; and the salvation in him is called, a great salvation; and the redemption in him, a plenteous redemption, 1 John 2:1. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ver. 2. And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

I remember, in the Levitical Law there were sacrifices for all sorts of sins; what did they prefigure, but the ample efficacy in the death of Christ, which was an atonement for sins of all kinds, and was as the daily sacrifice for the expiation of the continued and augmented number of transgressions?

Why, what are thy thoughts of Christ, and of redemption in him? dost thou not know?

First, that the sinner must find his full discharge in his blood: thou must be beholding to Christ for the payment of the smallest, as well as of the greatest debt.

Secondly, That the strength and merit of Christs death exceeds the merit of all sin: where sin abounded, there grace abounded much more: If it had not, then the sinner could not have been pardoned, for then justice had not been satisfied.

Thirdly, What the extension of Christs death may be, I will not dispute; but this is clear, the intension or merit of his death, is infinite, and exceeds the greatest sins.

Why! if sins had not been great, or if the greatness of them did prejudice from Christ really, God would never have given so great a Saviour as Christ; the Apostle saith, Heb. 7. that he is able to save to the utmost. And, that he redeems us from the law, Gal. 4. From all transgressions, whatsoever committed against the Law, and from all the curses of the Law against them.

Fourthly, Christ hath already answered this scruple, by giving instances of mercy to great sinners; was not David a murderer of Uriah? was not Mary Magdalen a foul sinner? was not Zacheus a griping oppressor? was not Paul a bitter and sore persecutor? were not those amongst the Corinthians sinners in the highest form; and yet Christ called them and washed them, and justified them.

Fifthly, the matter is not 'twixt thee and Christ, about the greatness or littleness of former sinnings, but about the present disposition and affection of thy soul; not what thou hast loved heretofore, but what thou wilt now love; not what thou hast followed, and served heretofore, but what thou wilt now chuse and obey. Though the Jews had been a sinful Nation laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, corrupters of themselves, Isa. 1:4, 5, 6. Forsakers of the Lord, provokers of the holy one of Israel, Apostates, Revolters, putrified from the sole of the foot, even unto the head, stark naught. Yet God comes unto them; and Articles thus with them, ver. 16. Wash you, make you clean, cease to do evil, ver. 17. Learn to do well, as if he should say, though you have been thus abundantly evil, yet now hearken unto me, let your hearts be turned from sins, and bestow them on me and my service.

1. Object. But what shall we do for pardon of the former sins?

Sol. Why saith God, do not you trouble your selves for that, only hearken unto me, and be willing and obedient for hereafter, and as for former sinnings, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool, ver: 18. The same I say in this case, Christ will find blood enough to

get the pardon of sins, if thy heart would come off from sin to accept him: I stand not saith Christ upon what thou hast been, I can easily discharge thee, only that which I require, is this, leave thy sins and accept of me. I beseech you take heed of two things, one is a secret Pride, that you will not be brought to be beholding to God for great pardons. Another is a present love of sin. This and not the former sinnings prejudiceth from Christ.

2. Obj. But God is just and he will not hold the sinner guiltless, and he hath revealed his wrath from heaven against all unrighteousness, and therefore if I should flie to the City of refuge, yet from thence would he withdraw me, and be avenged of me.

Sol. I Answer.

1. Even this also should constrain thee to believe, forasmuch as by unbelief thou becomest a great rebel against the Gospel, and he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, 2 Thes. 1:8.

2. Unless justice be satisfied, assuredly it will never spare thee, for Justice will have either thy obedience, or thy satisfaction.

But then the way to present satisfaction to Gods justice, is to believe in Christ, forasmuch as God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses.

It was Jesus Christ who performed full obedience, and endured an accursed death, to satisfie Gods justice, and this not for himself, but for the believer, and for none but for the believer.

So that there is no other way comfortably to answer justice, but by believing in Christ. For now thou hast a surety one who stood in thy stead, and answered Justice for all thy sins.

3. Divine justice will not desire a double satisfaction: It will not require satisfaction from thee and from thy surety too: The quarrel

ceaseth 'twixt thee and God; for Christ hath by his own blood taken that up. As Elibu spake of uprightnes, that I say of believing in the Lord Jesus; if thou dost, then the Lord will be gracious unto thee, and will say, deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransome, Job 33:23, 24.

Obj. But I, who am I? so totally unworthy; there is nothing in me to move Christ to engratiate me; he will never bestow himself on such an one as I am; will ever Christ look on such a dead dog as I am?

I answer to this.

1. Personal unworthiness, it is no prejudice: You read in Mat. 8:8. that the Centurion came to Christ for his servant, and believed on him and sped well.

Yea, will you say but he was worthy? nay, he professeth the contrary;

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: as if he should say, I have nothing in me to merit and challenge this gracious act of thine; nothing, and yet I believe that thou canst, and wilt heal my servant; so the Prodigal, I am not worthy to be, &c.

2. Nay, the humble sense of our unworthiness, it is a furtherance; Christ doth not expect any excellencies, and meritorious motives from thee; thou must come unto him as an empty vessel; the full soul and the sound spirit is not for him; bring a soul to Christ which is spread all over with misery and need, why such a soul is a proper object for mercy to deal with; bring a soul to Christ which is all over with lostness, with poverty, with sickness, with unworthiness, why, this is the soul upon which Christ will look. Its never well with a man untill he can take Christ upon his knee, upon a bare knee, with an empty hand, (that is) till he be brought to be poor in spirit, that he is nothing, and deserves nothing, and begs of Christ to accept of him, even for Christs sake. The Lord be mercifull to me a sinner, went home justified, when The thank God, I am not as other men, returned as he came, a proud Pharisee.

You shall find it thus, that God looks most on him who looks least on himself. The humble and contrite spirits, which are broken out of themselves, and can cry out, O Lord, I am really vile, and mostly unworthy; These the high God (who inhabits the lofty places) doth behold. And Christ is ready to take him by the hand, who thinks himself unworthy to touch his feet. There are two tempers which like Christ well; one is a believing heart, and another an humble soul.

3. Personal worthiness is not the motive, nor designed ground for faith in Christ; The ground of belief, that which invites the soul to draw on it self to Christ, is no deserving or eminent quality in our selves, but the goodness and fidelity of the promise, and the gracious offer of Christ himself to the soul. Behold, he calls thee; why, this is enough; if thou canst find God holding forth the golden Scepter, offering Christ unto thee, upon such and such terms, and thou consent unto them with all thy heart, thou maist confidently close and lay hold on Christ by faith.

This is the wise skill of a Christian, truly to observe the proper rise of faith.

When God promised Abraham a Son, the text saith, he did not consider his own body, Rom. 4:19. (that is) he did not consult with the strength of his own nature, what an able principle there was in himself to compass such an effect, but he was fully perswaded that what God had promised, that he was able to perform. The ability and fidelity of Gods promise exceedingly enclined his heart to believe. So is it here about faith in Christ; if thou dost consider thy own body, thy own deserts, thy own excellencies, thou shalt never believe; for faith can find no ground in these to encourage the soul: but the ground of faith is without our selves: Why, God offers me Christ, and Christ calls me unto him, being heavy laden; and he saith that he who believes in him, shall have eternal life. Now this is a word of truth, and this word of his is worthy of all acceptation, I will venture my soul upon it.

It is with faith as with a bird, cast him into the water he cannot flie; that element is too gross for him, he cannot gather and beat his wings there, and therefore is kept down; but cast him into the air, which is a more pure element, then he can clap, and spread the wings, and mount: why, faith is the wing of the soul, and the promise is that spiritual element, that air which breaths a life and motion to faith; faith is raised by it alone, and it is checked and hindered whiles the soul would force it to act it self upon those poor and gross excellencies in our selves. Faith desires no better object then Christ, nor surer pawns then Gods promise.

Fourthly to receive Christ by faith, it is not a matter of merit, but a point of duty.

When God commands a sinner to repent, and to forsake his sins, and take him, he shall have mercy if he will do it: This may not now be said, O Lord I am not worthy to obey thee in this duty, if I were worthy to repent, I would repent; nay, but O man, divine commands are to be obeyed, it is thy duty to repent. So God commands the soul to believe in Christ, to accept of him. The soul now looks on the excellencies of the gift, but forgets the obligation of duty; Its true, Christ is a most excellent gift and blessing, there is not such a thing in all the world for a poor sinner as Christ, but then know, that his excellencies may not take thee off from thy duty; This is his Commandment, that we believe on the Name of his Son.

Brethren, you are mistaken, to believe in Christ being proposed unto us in the Gospel, it is not a matter of indifferency, I may, or I may not; nor is it a matter of curtesie, as if we did a work of supererogation more then God requires; nay but it is a matter of conscience, a man sins he violates a command, an evangelical precept, if he doth not believe; It is not a dispute of worthiness or unworthiness, but it is obedience to the Command which thou art to look upon.

5. Christ is given out of rich grace, and mercy, and love, and therefore none can receive him but the unworthy. There is this difference 'twixt the reward of Justice, and the gift of graciousness; Justice hath an eye upon the disposition and acts of the person, and according unto their qualities and degrees doth it commensurate reward or punishment. But graciousness hath an eye only upon it self, the free bountifulness of its own nature is the reason of its gifts and acts. Suppose that a King executes a malefactor, this is an act of justice, and finds cause in the rebellion of the offender; Suppose that a King pardons a malefactor, this is an act of graciousness, and finds its reason only in the breast of the King, and not in the worthiness of the delinquent. Thou stand'st upon thy worthiness, O, if I were worthy of Christ! why; but is not Christ a gift? he is often said to be given; yea, but is he not a gracious gift? See Ephes. 2:7. God did shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Jesus Christ: As if he should say, if ever there were a gift free-given, it is Christ. If Christ be a gracious gift, then he is not bestowed on the worthy, but on the unworthy: not on him who can challenge and say, Lord there is good reason why I should have Christ; and thou shouldst do me wrong if I have him not; O no, but he is a gracious gift, and therefore the broken sinner may come in and say, O Lord, though I am unworthy, yet give me Christ; graciousness doth not expect any motion out of it self, and therefore, though in respect of my desert, shame and confusion be my portion, yet thy gifts of grace are free, for thy exceeding riches of grace, and mercy, and love, give me thy Christ.

If I meet an old decrepit poor beggar, and seeing misery and poverty in his face, I freely draw my purse, and say, there is a shilling for thee; O no, saith he, Sir! I am not worthy, I am a poor man and ready to starve, give it to that Gentleman yonder who is in gay cloathing, and hath thousands in his chests, for he is worthy, what a proud folly were this? why, my alms was a gracious dole, and if any man in the world had it, he had, who doth need, but doth not deserve it: So, &c.

6. Christ is worthy your taking, though thou be unworthy of receiving, 1 Tim. 1:15. This is a faithfull saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. As if he should say, this is so necessary a thing, so good a thing, so admirable a thing for a sinner, so meet for him to hearken unto, & to embrace, What, if the choisest Prince in the world should this day present himself to the foulest, ill-favouredst neglected woman, one without all beauty, without all parts, without all estate, and assure her, if she will consent to his terms, he will bestow himself upon her? Though she be totally unworthy to hear of such a thing, yet the person is worthy, and the acceptance of the motion is worthy, all the world sees reason enough that she should hearken. So it is, Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace, the Lord of life, the Author of salvation comes to a sinful soul, utterly naked, and void of spiritual excellencies, or over-run with all the spots of inglorious deformities, exposed to all kinds and degrees of present and future miseries, calls and invites that soul to accept of him upon his own terms, yet that soul stands off and excepts, I am not worthy; Thou worthy! saith Christ; what do I esteem of thy worthiness? Not for thy sake be it known unto thee, is it that I offer my self unto thee; not for any beautiful, or ingratiating ornaments and gifts is this, but for my own sake. Am I worthy the receiving? if so, then accept of me: Christ hath worthiness enough; and as our helps in the promises, draw us thither; so the treasures in Christ should do.

Objection. But you will say, Christ hath let fall a word, which tels me that there must be a subjective worthiness in me, as well as an objective worthiness in him; Matthew 10:13. If the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it.

Sol. I answer, that there is indeed a double worthiness.

First, one of the object, when it is so every way excellent, and necessary, and suitable to the exigencies of a person; so Christ is worthy.

Secondly, another of the subject, which (to restrain it now to the place alledged) is a worthiness of judgement and affection, not a worthiness of qualities and action. Then a man is said to be worthy, in reference to Christ, not because he hath any takeing and inviting qualities, but when he judgeth worthily of the Lord Jesus, and his affections draw after him as most worthy of all acceptance.

7. Lastly, what is that which makes thee unworthy? It is nothing in the world but sin, all the debasings of the soul are our sins; and so, there is a twofold unworthiness. 1. Meritorious. 2. Excluding.

But then mark, two things could never be, it meer sinnings did effectually prejudice the soul with an excluding unworthiness; one is, That Christ could never have been a worthy gift; Another is, That faith could never have believed truths in Christ; It could never take Christ as a Saviour, nor believe in him for the sure pardon of sins, if that sins absolutely did involve the soul with such an unworthiness as should for ever exclude it from partaking of Christ. O no; Though sins make unworthy, yet Christ came to call sinners; and though ungodliness makes unworthy, yet Christ justifies the ungodly.

4. Object. But I am not sure that Christ is willing to bestow himself on me, or that I should lay hold on him; else I should (I think) be able to believe.

Sol. To this I will return two things.

1. One is clearing Christs willingness.
2. The order of a Christians assurance.

First, That Christ is willing.

I shall but light a candle to the Sun in endeavouring to manifest the willingness of Christ to accept of sinners; Why? what can possibly express a willingness which is not espiable in Christ?

First, when thou wert a sinner and an enemy, yet then did Christ shed his blood and die for thee, Rom. 5:8, 10.

Nay, he did not do this through constraint, but through consent; it was a free-will offering; therefore is he said to offer himself; and lo I come; and to give himself, and to lay down his life, and to pay a price; nay, to be straitned till it were accomplished, Luke 12:50.

His death was the putting of the seal to the bond. It ratified all the Covenant, which it had not done, had not Christ been willing. Why, he knew thee long before, and saw thee in thy blood, before he shed his own: and had he been unwilling to have done thee any good, or that thou shouldst have received any good from him, he would never have cloathed himself with such a nature, as he did assume, neither would he have anguished his righteous soul, nor have suffered such a tormenting and accursed death. Verily, if I would lay down my life for a person, this would sufficiently argue and declare that I were willing to bestow my self on the person. So, &c.

2. Secondly, consider his many personal invitations: he hath from his own mouth both counselled and invited the poor sinner unto him. I counsel thee to buy gold, and raiment, and eye-salve, Rev. 3:18. The spirit and the bride say Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, Rev. 22:17. Ho! every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price; hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight it self in fatness. Encline your ear, and come unto me, and your soul shall live; And I will make with you an everlasting Covenant, even the sure mercies of David, Isa 55:1, 2, 3. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people. Ver. 4. Jesus stood and cryed, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink, John 7:37.

3. Thirdly, consider, he hath assured thee of acceptance: Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out, John 6:37. He will not shut the door against thee when he hath invited thee, but thou shalt be a welcome guest; nay, he will surely do thee good, Mat. 11:28. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

4. Fourthly, there was never any one who did come unto him, but sped well. Thou canst not find any one Iota of unwillingness, nor of his disregard, but all have found him to be a mercifull High Priest, and a compassionate Saviour, who have accepted of him.

5. Fifthly, consider, that he doth still negotiate with thee: Though he be returned to the highest heavens; yet he hath dispatched Embassadors in his Name, to publish, and to call upon thee, and to beseech thee, 2 Cor. 5:19. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Ver. 20. Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead be ye reconciled to God, Ver. 21. For he hath made him be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Object. If there were any hope of reconciliation (may a man reply) then I should believe.

Sol. Why, saith the Apostle, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.

Object. But if God had commanded any in his name to publish this:

Solution. He hath committed to us the word of Reconciliation.

Object. But you may do it out of your compassion, not from a commission.

Solution. We are Embassadors for Christ, and pray you in Christs stead.

Obj. But our sins will prejudice the Reconciliation.

Sol He hath made him to be sin for us.

Sixthly, consider his marvelous patience: If he were not willing, he would never have re-inforced his suit, but would have taken the first denial.

But he hath followed them, who have fled from him: He hath gone after the sinner, who hath many times turned his back, Rom. 10:21. All the day long have I stretched out my hand unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. In this sense we may apply that of the Prophet, He doth wait that he may be gracious, and yet continues his Embassadors to bring thee home unto him.

7. Seventhly, consider His sad complaints for thy holding off and not believing: when he came near to Jerusalem, he wept over it, and said, How often would I have gathered thee? Matth. 23:37. And O if thou hadst known, even thou, at the least in this thy day, the things which concern thy peace! Luke 19:41, 42. And why will you not come unto me? John 5:40. As if you did see a tender father pursuing a rebellious child, and working upon him by counsel and entreaties, and by hands of bounty, and he will not yet hearken; the father steps to a friend, and pouers out tears, O I cannot win him, I cannot turn him; doth not this shew a willingness? So, &c.

8. Lastly, consider his Will is exhibited to us in all the kinds of willingness: I observe that his will may be manifested three ways.

First, in commands, and there is a preceptive will, and Christ commands thee to believe.

2. Secondly, in promises, and there is a gracious and encourageing will, and Christ hath promised himself and all that he hath done and

suffered, if thou wilt believe in him.

3. Thirdly in threatnings: and there is a just and vindictive wil, and Christ hath pronounced an abiding wrath, and an everlasting death against him that will not believe; So that this is most cleer, that Christ is most willing that a poor sinner should come in and embrace him, and be saved by him.

Secondly, The Order of assurance.

But then for the order of assurance, that Christ is willing.

Observe that there is a double assurance.

1. One which is precedent, and grounds the soul to believe.

2. Another is subsequent, and attends the soul after its believing. That precedent assurance consists in a clear and convincing demonstration, that Christ is willing to be taken by the sinner. This subsequent assurance consists in a reflexive perswasion, that he is my Christ and Saviour, being by faith taken and accepted.

Now if a sinner expects this latter assurance before he will believe, he doth preposterously and vainly perplex his soul; nay, it is an impossibility to lead on the soul this way; nay, it were a falshood and a delusion to the soul, if it had a reflexive assurance, that Christ and his benefits are mine, before the heart did by faith believe in him and accept of him: I did cousen my soul with a lie; for Christ is not that mans who doth not yet believe on him; the wayes of this kind of assurance, is as it were the eccho of the Original wayes of faith; a consequent of it, but never an antecedent. For a man to solace himself, that the estate is his, before the person is his; or that the person is his, before he hath accepted of the person: Why, this is but the fruit of a vain and idle fancy: But the former assurance that is a sweet inducement unto the soul to believe, viz. when the soul can get three things cleared and resolved. 1. Ths certainty of a Saviour. 2. The alsufficiency of him. 3. His willingness to embrace and accept of

a believing sinner. Now this assurance is to be drawn from the very nature, and offices, and dispositions of Christ, and from the command, and invitations, and promises of the Gospel; which when the soul hath thoroughly perused, and scanned, it shall clearly see and freely acknowledge, (if it will not blasphemously suspect Gods own truths for lies) that Christ is both an able and also a willing Saviour; not only willing to lay down his life, but most willing that sinners should come to him and believe in him, and so find eternal life.

So that you may from this take notice of three things.

One, That to be assured of Christ as mine, is no ground for to move a man to believe, but it is a consequent of it.

Another, that to be assured that Christ is willing, and ready to be mine, and to accept of me, this is a sweet motive, and an encouraging ground for the soul to believe.

A third, there is no better way to feel the sweetness of Christs being willing to bestow himself upon a man, then by believing first on him; for it is faith in Christ which opens to a man all his interests in Christ: And if this be sure, that Christs willingness prevents thine; if therefore thou be willing to accept, the very nature of the treaty and match assures thee sufficiently that Christ was ready long ago.

5. Obj. But then saith the sensible sinner, I am not prepared and humble enough: Christ is to bind up the broken-hearted, but my heart is still hard; and Christ is to open the prison for them that are bound; but I am not (at least) in sufficient bondage; And he is to give the oil of joy for mourning; but I have no melting, nor mourning spirit, and therefore I may not believe on him, nor take him, for I am distinguished.

Sol. I shall not need to say much to this, because I have touched heretofore upon in the Exposition of Mal. 1:1. yet I will touch a little at this time.

1. There is a twofold humbling according to a double cause of it. One is in the exceeding beatings of the conscience, with inward terrors and fears, springing from the Power of the Law, which quickens the conscience, and wounds it with the express sense of former guilt, and which presents God in all the glories and terror of his justice, and as the great and sure avenger of an unrighteous person. When the soul is in this kind of humbling, it is filled with exquisite sense, and exquisite torment, like a man with a burning arrow in his thigh, or like a thief hearing the sentence of death pronounced upon him by the judge. Now this kind of humbling, though (sometimes) it may be an antecedent to faith in Christ, (for God doth many times bring a man to heaven by the gates of hell; he doth bruise, and wound, and even kill him by the terrors of the Law, and then revive him with the workings, and tender goodness of the Gospel) yet it may be (possibly) without any future access of the soul to Christ. For this, mark, that though God doth many times graciously superadd another work of conversion, to this of legal affliction; yet he may and doth many times distribute these sorrows in wrath, and they are but the testimonies of his pure and displeased justice, even in this life to begin an hell of anguish in the conscience of a proud and daring sinner.

Another is in the tender abasings and sweet bathings or mournings of the affection, when there is a fountain of sorrow set open within the soul, giving out it self in several streams of melting, because of sin and transgression. Now this latter is not an antecedent, but a consequent of faith in Christ, as you shall hear presently.

A man cannot rightly judge of his fitness to lay hold on Christ by the meer strength or measure of any legal humbling, but by the Issue and event of them.

If instead of one item from conscience thou shouldst now hear an hundred; and instead of one lash from conscience, thou shouldst now feel a thousand, though thy heart were broken into as many pieces as the glass which is dashed against the wall; though thy

spirits did even fry within thee, for the heat of horror, and that thou didst roar day and night for the disquietment of thy guilty conscience, yet couldst thou not confidently affirm by all this, I am now for Christ, and Christ will assuredly accept of me, I shall not miss of him.

Reasons whereof are these.

1. Because these may be Gods tokens of just vengeance on thee, meer punishments and judicial acts.
2. The soul under these may be rather taken up with the stinging guilt and fears of sin, then with the soul vileness, and base nature, and acts thereof (standing in contrariety to the holy and good will of a gracious God.)
3. The thus afflicted soul may cry out for Christ, meerly out of self-love, to ease the burden, but not to cure the nature, to deliver it from pain, but not to heal it of the sinfull inclination.

Therefore this I would say to any legall broken spirit, Do not judge of fitness meerly by the strength or depth of tears; there is a threefold enough. 1. Intensive for the degree. 2. Extensive for the time. 3. Dispositive for the efficacy; therefore do but observe what disposition attends and follows these: There be five things which if they follow upon legall humblings, may be subordinate encouragements to the heart, to put it self upon Christ.

First, if quite driven out of ones self.

Secondly, if sin comes to be felt as the basest evil, as the guilt of it hath been found the sorest pain.

A third is if the heart finds it self any way loosned from the league of iniquity; yea, and that a secret war is begun now 'twixt the soul and the sinner.

Fourthly, an high estimate and valuation of Christ, as the only and choisest good of my soul, and hope, &c.

An active and fervent desire to put the soul under the Government of the Lord Jesus.

Whether thy legal humblings be great or small, long or short, more or less, that's not the thing; but if they be thus attended, thou maist safely venture thy soul upon the Lord Jesus; thou maist believe, and he will in no wise refuse thee.

3. Faith in Christ will not hinder the humblings or meltings of thy soul.

I observe when there is a Thunder-clap, then there is such a hurry in the cloud that fire flasheth out, and the cloud is brust insunder, and a mighty deluge of water is thrown down; and you may likewise observe that the Sun doth (though there be no storm) draw up and sweetly open and pierce the clouds, which thereby give down the most seasonable and refreshing showers of rain. The Law is like a Thunder-clap, it doth many times so toss, and hurry, and vex the conscience, that infinite sighs, and fears, and tears gush out: But then faith makes the Sun of righteousness to arise within the soul, and nothing melts the heart more then Christ apprehended by faith. Zach. 12:10. They shall look upon him whom they peirced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and they shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

For faith,

First, sees the greatest love, the sweetest kindness, the freest pardons, the readiest acceptations; all which do even melt the heart into a river, and works the greatest mourning.

I doubt not but the very behaviour of the father of the Prodigal, brake the heart of him with more thawings and kindly mournings, then ever did his former misery and hardship; O this, that though he was

an ungracious spend-thrift, a stubborn child, a lewd companion, Luke 15. yet his Father should run to meet him, that he should fall upon his neck and kiss him, the kindness of those lips wounded his heart with the deeper sense and judging of his own unkindness. So when a sinner shall by faith see Christ stepping forward in the Gospel, putting forth the hand to him, calling him, Come, thou hast done evil as thou canst, hast wronged my father, me, my spirit, my servants, thy self; I will get thee pardon for all: fear not, nor be dismayed, I will take upon me the discharge: I will be thine, my blood thine, my righteousness thine; O, this melts the heart: thou canst not take Christ, but thy heart will break: nor read thy pardon but thine eyes will melt; what for me, Lord! yea, for thee. What after such deep rebellions! yea, after all, and that most freely and willingly; Good Lord, how the soul weeps now, &c.

Secondly, faith sees sin in the greatest vileness: It is one thing to see sin at Hell-gates, and another thing to see sin (if I may so allude) at Heaven-gates: there I see it in its reward, which causeth fear; here I see it in its proper nature, which causeth hatred. When I can see sin as wrong of a righteous and holy will, as a rebellion against a holy and just Law, as a provocation of a great and holy God, as the spear thrusting through the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the basest quality, and vilest abuse, and indignity to love, and mercy, and blood; now, now I begin to melt, to grieve, a God is wronged, a Father is wronged, a Saviour is wronged.

3. Faith melts the promises, and the promises melt the heart: Why, brethren, our soft and mourning hearts are not first in us, and then in the promises, but first in them, and from them they come down into us. The heart of flesh is first in that promise, Ezek. 36. I will take away the heart of stone, and give you an heart of flesh, and thence it comes to the person for to fashion and mollifie his heart. But what draws the promises? Is it not faith? It is the only hand which reacheth out unto them, and receives them; whence it doth fully follow, that believing will be no prejudice, but a great furtherance to thy mournful humblings and softnings.

Object. I grant it, when a man can indeed believe, this believing will much abate, and perhaps the remove actuals of an horrible stumbling, (that is) a man shall not now feel such a desperate terrifying, bitter, hopeless anguish as before, but yet it doth open a full vein within the soul, which drops with vital sorrows, with gracious lamentings, with hearty displeasures, with hopefull tears; and though under them the soul is not so hurried, yet it weeps bitterly, as the wife which holds the lately reconciled husband by the hand, or as the child which is newly pardoned and embraced.

This is a truth, that faith can heal the tears of a slave, and breed the tears of a child: It can rebuke the ragings of the sea, and yet continue its flowing courses; It can still a raging conscience, and yet beget a stream of godly sorrow; It can both quiet a troubled spirit, and raise within us a soft and mourning heart. Yea to speak plainly, a man never till then begins to mourn as a child, till he hath faith to see God as a father; and the gracious looks of Christ (which only faith espies) they upbraid our sinnings more, and no such springs of grief as they.

6. Object. But I have stood out my day, and have refused many invitations, and offers, as now I may not believe. I am sure that Christ will never regard me, because of my former proud refusals of him in his gracious offers and invitations: Now the day is gone, It is too late.

Sol. To this I answer.

1. That not only the positive refusals, but also the slighting pretermissions of the voice of the Gospel, are (undoubted) sinful; for if disobedience to the Law, then much more unto the Gospel is very bad; no man can refuse his remedy, but he makes his wound the greater.

2. Again it is granted, the greater kind of refusal, adds a greater measure of guilt: the refusals of light against light, is a more dark condition: (that is) when a man knows the Gospel to be the voice of

Christ, and to propound heaven and mercy upon the only terms, and yet he is not gathered, this is sin in more degrees then the passing over it, then ignorance, and inobservation: again, the more wilfully a man refuseth his opportunity and invitations, this also makes the refusall more hainous, and calls upon the soul for greater humblings.

But then know,

1. That Christ is not alwayes so quick to break off (for ever) for some refusals: It is not an uncapable condition, (a sealed state) if a man hath stood out against many particular invitations. This simply is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; and therefore it is pardonable; and if the sin be pardonable, then the sinner is capable of Christ, in whom alone sin is to be pardoned.

2. Scarce any believer (who is called after the ripeness of years) but hath of enrefused (before his conversion) many invitations by grace and mercy. It were an horrid harshness for any Minister to send all them to hell, who once refuse the news and tender of heaven: Nay, we see that Christ hath several seasons of conversion; some he brings home to himself at the night, at the Letter end of the day, who questionless refused him in the former part of the day; nay, that grace which doth gather a man to Christ, conquers our refusing hearts. Ergo, meer refusing is not an eternal prejudice. It is true, that whiles I do refuse, I cannot believe; yet though I have formerly refused, I may yet believe.

There is a double refusal of Christ, and the invitations of the Gospel; one is malicious, this is fearfull; another is temerarious, and this is pardonable: That is accompanied with a despitefulness of spirit; this depends much upon rashness, temptations, inadvertency.

Again, there is a double refusal; one is total, but temporary; A man doth not hearken, though Christ doth call; he will not subscribe, though Christ propounds, but goes in his own way and course; yet at

length with Paul, he may be struck to the ground, and yield up himself to Christ.

Another is, total and final, which is an impenitent rebellion; A man holds out against the voice of Christ for ever; there is no hope for such a person.

2. No broken an grieved heart for former refusals can justly say, that it hath stood out its day, and it is too late to believe.

This is a thing of some concernment, and many are very strict in it; I will only present my thoughts amidst the crowd of conjectures.

First, how punctual Gods day of grace is in the offer of Christ, so that if a man doth not take it in the first moment of tender, I think none can tell.

Secondly, to say of this or that particular man, that he is gone beyond his day, for ought I know, goes beyond our commission.

Thirdly, that at any time when the Gospel is published, then it ought presently to be embraced, Today if you will hear his voice, &c.

Fourthly, God doth not take away from a man his day alwayes immediately upon his first refusal; if so, perhaps it would have been night with all the world ere this.

Fifthly, it is probable that the day of grace is not closed against a particular person, when his heart begins to be broken for former refusals: for when men out-stand this day, usually they are given up to a feared conscience, to a reprobate mind, to a senseless stupidity, and to the works of sin with greediness; they grow worse and worse, being not only destitute of all softning qualities, but being more hardned by the Gospel, which they refused and despised. The man who out-stands his day, is either deprived of the sound of the Gospel, or else he hath only the judicial power of it working upon him.

3. The sense and grief of the heart for former standings out; this, I say, proclaims that thy day is not set, nay, this is thy singular and special day.

Divines do distinguish of the day.

One is General, like the rising of the Sun, the very rising and publishing of the Gospel makes a day.

Another is special, which is like one of the twelve hours in the day, when the Spirit of God begins to make day within the heart, and Christ is dealing and secretly parling with the soul, by conviction of its former refusals, by sweet humblings and meltings for such proud and erroneous denials: That the Prince of my peace should be refused, that the Lord of my life should be refused, that the terms of righteousness and mercy should be refused; O how the heart judgeth, condemns, rents, and afflicts it self for it; falls down at the feet of Christ, not worthy O Lord to look upon thee, whom I have so often undervalued! This is a special day, here's a season for thee, thou maist go to Christ, Christ hath dealt with thee effectually, this is the acceptable time.

4. If thou hast stood out against Christ hitherto, thou hast therefore now the more reason to come in, and not to refuse the offer yet continued.

Observe two things.

First, that former rebellions are never taken off by new and continued: For this is to make sinning much the worse; perhaps thou didst refuse Christ heretofore through ignorance, (thou didst not see his excellencies, nor thine own necessity) or perhaps through inadvertency or carelessness, thou didst not wisely and seriously heed that great salvation in him; But now thou art convinced, now thou seest thy refusals and careless pretermissions to be sinful: Why; is this the way to cure the former by adding more refusals? Didst thou well to refuse him upon his own terms? if thou didst ill, then cease

refusing; labour to accept of them: Thou canst never please God by continuing in a sin, nor help thy self by pleading against thy duty.

Secondly, thy obligation and present duty ceaseth not because of former refusals: It was thy duty to have received Christ at the first, and to this very day doth that duty lie upon thee: former miscarriages should cause our humblings, but they never disannul our duties: Why; the Gospel is yet in its revelation of Christ, and yet in its tender of Christ unto thee, and yet in commanding of thee to refuse him no more, but to hearken and to believe, (that is) to accept of Christ to be thy Lord and Saviour.

Object. Oh why, what should I do? faith a soul that hath stood out.

Solnt. I answer, thou shouldst look back on thy withstandings with hearty grievings, and shouldst press on towards thy duty with fervent requestings; now lay down thy weapons and strive to give up thy self to Christ, not to harden thy heart any longer, but beg of God day and night to forgive thy refusals, and to give thee now a heart to believe and to yield.

5. Christ will accept of any man who is willing to lay down his weapons.

Object. 'Tis true that Christ saith, These mine enemies who will not have me to reign over them, bring them forth and slay them before me; If a man will be still an enemy, if he will not accept of Christ to be his Lord, to govern him, then Christ will be a Judge and enemy to that man, he shall perish.

Sol. But it is as true, that if we accept of reconciliation, if we would lay aside former enmity, if we come unto Christ and cast our selves down at his feet, and give up the sword which sought against him; if we confess our rebellions, and beseech him to accept of us into his service, and into mercy: If we heartily desire now to be the servants of righteousness, to take Christ to be our Lord, and to serve him alone, assuredly he will not refuse us. Therefore, if any here this day

have their spirits entangled with this scruple, that they now have refused Christ, and are past their day, but withal they find their hearts bleeding for this, and they do now judge of Christ as the chiefest of ten thousands, and it is the desire of their souls to be reconciled, and to put themselves under the government of the Lord Jesus, I say unto such, fear not, come and accept of Christ, he will be reconciliation to thee; Though thou hast been an enemy, yet if now thou wilt accept of the terms of peace, the Son of peace will certainly accept of thee.

7. Object. Yet the sensible sinner is not satisfied for all this; I am afraid; Why? because I find not only former guilts in a manifold number, but present corruptions in exceeding strength; no man living hath an abominable heart as I, surely the Lord Jesus will loath me and depart from me; a sinfull wretch; I cannot think otherwise, how then should I believe?

Sol. For some resolution of this scruple, observe a few particulars.

First, the sense of the strength of sin is no unhopeful symptom, nor prejudice to faith. Of all tempers, the hardned is most dangerous; and sin hath the greatest strength, where there is the least sense: A man seems to be nothing else but a lump of sin, when he is so wholly leavened and sowred, that not a part in him can reflect upon it self, and feel its filthiness; where the guilt of sin is no burden, and the nature of sin is no trouble, that soul is in an ill case.

But the sense of the strength of sin imports something else in the soul besides sin: When the patient is deadly sick, he saith he is well and feels no pain; but when a patient is recovering, he is full of sense: and complains his head is weak, his stomach sick, his bones lame, all is amiss. There is more hope of one sensible sinner, then of a thousand presumptuous and hardned wretches; And God seldom or never gives a man a sense of Christ, who hath not had first a sense of his sinfulness.

There is a double sense of sin.

1. One is meerly judicial, which is the feeling of the guilt of sin when God awakens the conscience to apprehend its former sinnings, and imprints some degrees of wrath upon it as the fruits of guilt; and now the sinner is broken and crushed, for he feels a kind of hell in himself for his former sinnings.

2. Another is more then judicial; It is something more grievous, and that is, when a man doth not only feel the guilt of sin as pressing, but the nature of sin as an oppressing burden; He sees and feels the inclinations and motions of his heart, as most repugnant to the will and glory of God, and therefore is exceedingly afflicted and disquieted: This now is an admirable hopefull Symptome.

Secondly, Unbelief is no cure to the strength of sin: Whether thou conjecture the strength of sin to consist in hardness of heart; why, unbelief will never soften thee; or whether thou conjecture the strength of it to consist in the approbation of sin; why, unbelief will never condemn and disapprove it; or whether thou conjecture (though not rightly) its strength to consist in meer inclinations; why, unbelief will never alter them; or whether thou thinkest its strength consists in frequency of actions or motions; why, unbelief will never remove or lessen them; or whether thou thinkest its strength consists in commands and power; why, unbelief will never conquer them.

Unbelief is a sin it self, and therefore can be no cure of sin, (for nothing cures the sinner, but that which is contrary unto sin:) Nay, unbelief keeps off the soul from its cure, from its help; the help of sinful soul is in heaven, but unbelief knows not the way upward, the heart of unbelief will depart from the living God.

Thirdly, Christ is a Physitian for a sick sinner, and he hath said, that the whole need not the Physitian, but the sick. Why, The sick person is no unsuitable object or present for a Physician; his calling is to heal distempers and sicknesses; and thou maist confidently go to

Christ to have thy sick soul healed. We cannot brethren, we cannot, and Christ knows it well enough, we cannot come to Christ, but we must be beholding to him for two things. One, his merit to get our sins pardoned; Another is his Spirit, to get our sinful natures changed. And therefore Christ is appointed of God, not only to be Redemption but also to be Sanctification; as he is the Author of salvation to us, so he is the Author of Sanctification in us; We cannot come to him and bring good natures; O no, the grace which we want, is in Christ, in our Head, as water in the Spring, and from his fulness must we receive grace for grace. None can change that vile heart of thine but Christ; His wings are Healing, and to him art thou appointed to come as the sick person to the Priest in the Levitical Law.

The Covenant of grace (you know) is an undertaking, not only for pardon, but for changing; and all the Covenant is made good in Christ. As if God should say unto a sinner, I know thou art a guilty person full-well, and besides that thou hast filthy and abominable nature; but go to my Son, accept of him, there is thy pardon in him, and there is thy change in him, he shall justify thee from thy guilt, and he shall sanctify thy nature from its vile corruption.

Fourthly, Jesus will not loath thee because of thy sinful nature, but will help thee because thou art a sick person. Remember it for ever; the more vile thou art thine own eyes, the more precious thou art in Christs opinion; I never read of any person who came to Christ, Thou Lord heal me, but he was sent away cured.

Fifthly, What dost thou think of believing? what is thy opinion of faith? what, as if faith were an enemy or hinderance to holiness? That it will either increase, or suffer lewdness in the heart? far be it from thee so to think; O no, Faith is the singular way of encreasing and getting all grace to thy soul; it deals altogether with holy principles, God, Christ, the Spirit, and with holy wayes, the Word, the Sacraments; Faith engageth all the goodness and strength of heaven for thy change, and for the renewing and subduing of thy

sinful heart. Rom. 6:14. Sin shall not have dominion over you, saith the Apostle; and why? for ye are under grace: Mark it, under grace (that is) under a gracious Covenant, wherein God and Christ have engaged themselves to thy aid and strength; yea, but what makes us to be under this grace? Verily it is faith in Christ in whom all grace is ensured to the soul.

Nay, if thou couldst by faith accept of Christ to be thy Lord and Saviour, now mightest thou confidently go unto him to express the vertues of his Sovereignty and goodness to thee; Now mightest thou plead with him for the excellencies of his Spirit; Lord Jesus, I have bestowed my self on thee, and thou didst invite and assure me, that thou wouldst be, not only righteousness, but sanctification also unto me; I beseech thee, send forth the rod of thy Scepter, the vertues of thy grace, and change by thy holy Spirit this unholy heart of mine, subdue mine iniquities, cast down every imagination exalting it self against thee, bring into captivity (O my soul desires to be captivated to thee, yea, by thee) every thought, &c.

There is a pregnant difference 'twixt presumption and faith; presumption is but the birth of an idle fancy, like a dream of great matters, which yet hath no real bottom, but only flies out of a multiplying imagination which is full of deluding acts.

But faith conjoyns the soul with a lively principle, with a true fountain of grace with a root of holiness, even with Jesus Christ himself, without whom we can never be made holy, and by whom (being ingrafted into him by faith) we shall be sanctified throughout.

Look as the defiling qualities of our nature are first in Adam, and then in us his posterity; so changing and sanctifying qualities are first in Christ, the second Adam, and from him derived to us his members.

And then know that there is not such a Ligament to tie us in Union with Christ, as Faith; nor is there any such instrument to draw out

the vertues of Christ into the soul as faith.

You read of those in the Gospel who brought diseased bodies to Christ, and yet when they believed, they went away with cured and healed tempers; what doth this intimate unto us, but that the sensible sinner weary of his sinful nature, should make his address unto the Lord Jesus for cure, and health, and that he should by faith accept of him, and trust upon him for the healing of his soul, and the subduing of his sins, and then verily you shall find vertue to come from Christ, raising a greater hatred of sin, war with it in the very fountain, watching and praying against it, and the power of the ordinances successively weakning and crucifying the power of sin.

Lastly, know this that the time of contrariety is the time for faith to work. When a man sees death, then is it the time for faith to believe life. When he sees the grave, then is it the time for faith to believe a resurrection; when he sees guilt then is it the time for faith to believe pardoning mercy; when he sees himself a sinner, then is it the time for faith to believe a Saviour; when he sees strong corruptions, then is it the time for faith to believe great grace; when he sees great discomforts, then is it the time for faith to believe strong consolations; the exigences of sense, and the reliefs of the promises are quite contrary; what I feel is one thing, what God doth promise is another thing. That which the Patient observes in himself, is sickness; and that which he hopes for in the medicine is health. Hath God made thee sensible of thy sins? dost thou find thus much, that all that thou canst do will not become a rebuke of corruption? thou art able now to see the strength of thy sinfull nature, but to remove it thou art utterly unable? Why, what is now to be done? truly, as in the sense of the guilt of sin, we must then fly by faith to God, and put our souls upon his free mercy for pardon; so in the sense of the filthy strength of sin, we must to heaven by faith, and put our souls on Gods faithful promises in Christ, for the healing and subduing of it. This is the way, and therefore strive to walk in it; you may try other wayes, but they shall not help you, and perplex your own thoughts, but they shall not avail you; the cure of the sinful soul is only in

heaven, and it is faith only which can lift up a soul to God and Christ, which puts it into the pool. When sin is felt, then let faith work; If thou canst find any one promise which God hath made of sanctifying and healing, and subduing; Why, here's ground for faith; yea, for thy faith; for in these promises are the cures of thy sinful nature, and faith it is which will apply the healing medicines to thee.

8. Obj. Yet I am not satisfied, saith the sensible sinner and fearful soul; Why, Because, First, I cannot find an heart to duty, to pray and seek of God; and surely if God did purpose and mean any good to me, he would in some measure frame, and encline, and excite my heart towards him. Secondly, yea, and again, though I do sometimes seek and intreat, yet I observe that what I was, that I am; nothing comes of it; how then can I, may I, should I be enduced to believe?

Sol. Here are two sore and real scruples which do indeed vehemently beat upon a sensible sinner. I shall endeavour to assoil them successively.

1. I cannot find an heart to any duty, to pray for faith, &c.

I answer,

1. As the inability to holy duties depends on natural corruption, so the indisposition towards them depends exceedingly upon unbelief: There is nothing disheartens a man more towards God then it: For besides this, that unbelief in its own nature is a departure from God, (it is a bias drawing the soul downwards) This also is true of it, that it represents God to the soul in all the appearances and methods of discouragements. It makes the soul to see nothing in God, or from God, which might encline it to him: O, saith unbelief, there is such holiness and purity in him, that he will never endure thee; there is such truth and justice in him, that he will assuredly be avenged of thee.

There is such strength and power in him, that he will certainly meet with thee, and lay load on thee: There is, I confess, a mercifulness in

him, but alas his tender bowels of compassion, his ready forgiveness extends not to thee; there are many sweet intimations in his promises, but they concern not thee; there is a mighty salvation in Christ, and powerful intercession to ingratiate some persons and their services, but what of this to thee! He is a God hearing prayer; yea, but he will not regard the cries nor tears of some, but their Sacrifices are an abomination unto him. And thus doth unbelief set up God utterly against the soul, so that the poor soul conceiving of God as an enemy, dares not come neer him, flies off, is even afraid to speak to him; It is perswaded by unbelief, that God will frown upon all that is done, whereupon the spirit sinks, the affections are flatted; I have no mind, nor heart, am like a lump, a stock, a stone.

Secondly, it is faith which will fetch up the soul, Psal. 27:13. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord, &c. As if he should say, my spirits were even breathing themselves out, I was even sinking down, giving up all, unless I had believed; but that confidence of Gods goodness towards me, that did put life into me, that did fetch me again, that did put heart into me.

You see now the spring is coming on, that those (seemingly) dead branches of the trees, they begin to thrust out some hopeful sproutings, and put on another colour of freshness; why? because the root is now more fed and warmed. It is faith which will put colour into our faces, and spirit into our hearts, and life into our duties.

For,

1. Faith sets open the mercy-seat: It represents God to the soul in all his attributes of graciousness, not as an hard tyrant, but as a good God, willing to give audience to the humble requests and suit of a poor sinner; Nay, willing to dispatch and grant his requests: What is thy request? said Ahasuerus to Queen Ester, it shall be granted thee, &c? So saith the Lord, What wouldst thou have of me? Is it mercy? I do promise it unto thee; Is it grace? I promise that unto thee; Is it strength? is it comfort? is it deliverance? whatsoever it be, if thou

believe on me, I will not fail to give to thee. Nay, I will do it freely, nay, cheerfully, with all my heart, and with all my soul, Jer. 32.

Yea, this makes the soul to come unto God, as the ship into the haven with full speed and stretched sails: O the soul bends the knee with cheerfulness, when it sees it shall be raised up with kindness; a man may have some heart to pray, when he knows, My God will hear me, that God hath a readiness to answer.

2. Faith sets the soul in the prevailing way: it puts the soul to seek and pray with such motives as it is most sure shall make it to speed.

There are many motives which men take to prevail with God; O, they can do nothing, God regards them not; the strength of a mans excellencies, of his own worthiness, of his own abilities and frame, alas, these are not the prevailing and binding motives; all these import that they would speed for their own sake. But faith layes these aside; it hath motives from Gods own heart and mouth, with which it teacheth the soul to urge God, the Name of Christ, the gracious goodness of God himself, the fidelity of his promises, his own word; Now God hath said that these shall prevail with him; and faith knows it to be infallibly so, and heteupon draws on the soul with marvellous cheerfulness to seek the Lord.

3. Know this, that no man shall in good earnest set upon God for faith, and other graces, but Satan will set upon his heart, and his heart will set against his wayes in this. This were a wonder indeed, if a man could get into Christs arms without any more ado: That he should instantly have an heart (in all imaginable respects) sweetly and totally framed with the strength, and uninterrupted gales of heavenly inclinators and performances. Alas! poor soul, thou must by weak faith fight hard to get strong faith, and thou must by any duty make way for clearer duty: well is it with thee, if instead of words thou canst sometimes seek God with sighs, and when sighs fail, if yet with groans and desires. When thou wouldst do good, thou shalt find evil present with thee; when thou feelest an heart to pray,

perhaps even that motion is almost struck out by another heart in thee, which is most unwilling to pray; when thou feelest any climbings of thy soul by faith in thy heart, even these will be opposed by strong doubtings and suspicions by another heart of unbelief within thee. Nevertheless remember this, that this particular opposition being refilled, disliked, bewailed, doth only declare that there is in thee, that which is contrary to thee, and that Satan dislikes thy way; it doth not testifie that God dislikes it, or will not accept of thee.

If God hath given unto thee any desires towards him, O cherish them as one would a spark; The beginnings of a Christian are in much weakness, and manifold distractions and oppositions; but there is a God who gave unto thee those breathings, and can understand sectet groans; and there is a Christ, who can and will make weak services acceptable, and in time will give the victory after the combate.

Secondly, Many seekings, but nothing comes of them.

This doth exceedingly distract the soul; the unsensible alterations of the soul after many seekings, usually raise a prejudice against God and our selves; but for this observe some particulars.

1. The efficacy of seekings, consists not in the quantity or or number, but in the quality and manner. Have you offered unto me Sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness fourty years, O house of Israel? Amos 5:25. So I say, hast thou offered prayers unto God in these many dayes of thy distresses? nay thou hast come before him with words, but not with prayers.

What, thinkest thou that the Lord is pleased with all thy tears, and with all the humblings of thy Spirit, and with all the importunities of thy requests, whiles under them all thou dost not stick to tell God to his face that he is a dissembler and lyar? In all these thy sacrifices and approaches unto the great and high God, thou didst not believe any one promise which he hath made; thou hast thought that God

would not do thee good; and is it likely that thou shouldst speed well at his hand, who reproachest the true and faithful God?

Obj. I do indeed pray, because I must, I am commanded, but I verily believe it is in vain; tush, what tell you me of Gods promises? he will never perform them to me.

Sol. Good God! what, shall the Lord not only command by a righteous word, but assure and invite by a good and faithful word, a word as true as truth it self, and is it but a tush with us? is it not of any more account with us? nay, not of so much account as the word of a poor man? No marvel that nothing comes after many seekings, such seekings of pride and unbelief, infidelity, for the pardon of which I advise thee to speed up many more seekings of faith.

2. Right seekings shall alwayes come to something; Though the proud and impatient person said, It was in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord? Mal. 3:14. Yet God assures them, that the day should come that they should return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not, Ver. 18. Sweet is that place of the Prophet Isaiah, Mine Elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands, Isa 65:22. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble, Verse 23. It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and whilst they are yet speaking, I will hear, Ver. 24.

And the reason is, because God is faithfull who hath promised, and he will never suffer his truth to fail. If there be any good thing which he hath commanded thee to pray for, and which be hath underken for thee in his promises, and which thou dost humbly sue out in the name of Christ by faith; I say, rest upon it, it shall be given to thee if thou canst but wait on God in the use of the means.

3. There is a double answer to the seeking of the soul; one is real, another is sensible: As when a request is presented to the King,

either for pardon or settling; if he accepts of the request and put his seal to the authorizing of the grant, the request is really done, though (perhaps) the petitioner knows it not: So it is with the Lord many times in his answerings; he doth the things really for us, though we be not presently sensible of it: we beg for mourning hearts, and for hearts to hate sin; and for hearts to pray unto him, and then we feel our hearts hard, and our corruptions bursting forth upon us, which makes our hearts bitterly to grieve, and stirs up extream loathings of our vile natures, and causeth the soul to lie groveling with most striving and fervent importunities at heaven gate; Why, here are now the very things that we would have, yet we are not many times sensible that these things are answers.

4. We must distinguish 'twixt nothing absolutely, and nothing comparatively. Why, it is true, that the Holy heart hath such an extream abomination of sin, and such an high thirst of grace, that the present answers from heaven seem as nothing (that is) there is yet something more and more which I would have; the present grants are not satisfying of my desires, yet something is got by every faithful seeking; there is not one faithful prayer, which thou hast dispatched to heaven, but it delivers thy message, and is returned with a blessing.

Either it gets more additions to some grace or other, or more alienation from some sin or other, or more disposition to some duty or other, or more resolution to seek, or more strength to wait. Like the many Bees which go out, every one comes home with some thing, one with honey, another with wax; so every faithfull prayer flies up to heaven, and gathers something or other from the good promises, and though not so much as thou desirest, yet alwayes more then thou deservest; though not so much as to satisfie, yet as to help.

5. Suppose that yet you are not answered, it is then a sin to murmur and quarrel, but it is thy duty to wait.

I observe this.

1. That God never gives thee so large an alms, but that thou needest the next hour to become a farther Petitioner.

2. That God is pleased to make the beggar to stay sometimes at door; he doth not alwayes presently give what he intends certainly to bestow, but as his own free-grace is the treasury of our gifts and supplies, so his own wisdom is the dispensor of the time and season.

Now then, as the goodness of the promise should draw us to believe, so the fidelity and certainty of is should cause us to wait and expect: God doth give thee leave to urge him, but he likes it ill to hasten him; if God doth promise, then it is thy duty to believe; and if he stayes, then it is thy duty to wait; for God doth wait that he may be gracious, and blessed are all they that wait for him.

CHAP. XVII

Of living by faith

Having formerly shewed unto you what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and earnestly pressed upon you to get faith in him: I now proceed to another Use, which (supposing that by this time you have attained unto faith) shall be to excite and perswade you then to live by that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved, there be two offices of faith.

One is to breed conjunction and acceptance, and this is done when the heart is upon good, and choice, and deliberated grounds, effectually inclined to consent and take whole Christ upon his own terms.

Another is to breed dependance, and this is done when the believing soul makes continued use of that fulness and vertue which is in Christ touching the continued exigencies of its state and condition in this life. As it is with a woman, she first gives her consent and becomes a wife, and then being a wife, she looks upon her husband as the only person to supply her, direct her, comfort her, provide for her and hers.

So is it with faith, first it doth espouse the soul to Christ, it takes him as Lord and husband, and then it casts all the provisions of the soul upon him, all the supplies and helps; it trusts on him for righteousness, on him for pardon of sins, on him for grace, on him for strength, on him for comfort, on him for eternal life, &c.

Now because this is a point of singular consequence, give me leave therefore (and it matters not, if now and then I make a little digrestion) to unfold these particulars, that you may the better understand and be assisted, how to use that faith in Christ, which you have to live upon him by it.

1. What it is (in the general) to live by faith.
2. To what states the life of faith may extend.
3. What it is more particularly to live by faith on Christ.
4. What Arguments and Enducements I have to press, not only the getting of faith, but also the living by faith on Christ.
5. In what particulars the Believers should live by faith on Christ.
6. what things oppose the life of faith.
7. Tryals, if so that we live by faith.
8. what good helps way be found out to assist, and more and more to encline and enable the believing heart still to live by faith.

If any other profitable and pertinent enquiry may hereafter fall in for the better information and direction, besides those particular heads which I have now propounded unto you, you shall have a view of them likewise; but for the present I can think of no more: Now the God of mercy, and Father of all consolations, direct and bless their deliveries so unto you, that you may not only have that precious faith, but live by faith, nay, and die in faith, and so receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

SECT. I

Quest. 1. What is it (in the general) to live by faith?

Sol. I will not now stand on the several kinds and sorts of life, viz. That there is a life of vegetation which the trees and plants do live; and a life of sense which the beasts and cattel do live; and that there is a life of reason and knowledge which man doth live; and that there is a life of faith which the Christian either doth, or should live.

Neither will I stand upon the opposition 'twixt the living by faith, and living by works, one being a legal life, and upon our selves; the other being an Evangelical life, and upon Christ.

Nor now of that opposition 'twixt the life of faith and the life of sense, the one being a life in hand, the other in promises; That depending upon our eye, this upon our ear, (that is) sense dwelling on what it can see, and faith on that good word which it doth hear.

These things being passed over, I conjecture, that to live by faith, may be thus described.

It is an heavenly and dutiful committing of our whole persons, and of our whole estates unto God, with a pious depending upon his faithful and good promises in Christ, for sutable and seasonable supplies in all our exigences, occurrences, and changes whatsoever.

Here are divers things observable.

First, to live by faith, is to commit all to God: It is as it were to intrust him with our selves and ours. I know (faith Paul) whom I have believed, and I am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, 2 Tim. 1:12. As if he should say, I have put my very soul and life into the hands of Christ, who I know will look to it, take care of it for ever. David makes this to be the putting of our selves under God, as our Shepherd, Psal. 23:1. and as our Keeper, Psal. 121:5. Mark this, a man lives not by faith when he undertakes to be himself the Lord of himself, or a God to himself, when he trusts to his own heart, or will subsist by his own arm, or when he puts his confidence in any arm of flesh. O no, faith gives God the honour of our beings and safeties, and resigns up all to be, and to be disposed as the Lord pleaseth; If he will have me to enjoy, well; if to want, well; if to abound, well: if to be abased, well; I would be as he would have me to be; and I would be estated as he would have me to be estated; If he thinks good to bestow a fair estate upon me, I desire to be humble and thankfull; If he thinks good to limit me to a mean estate, I desire to be humble and contented; If he keeps me in a free condition, I desire to love him; if in a perplexed condition, I yet desire to fear and serve him: though I would be carefull and diligent, yet I would not be anxious and vexing; I dare to trust him with my soul, to preserve, sanctifie, uphold, comfort, save it; I trust him with my body, to preserve, enable, change, and dispose it; I trust him with my whole estate, to give it, alter it, increase it, lessen it, keep it, bless it, as may make most for his glory and my good.

Secondly, To live by faith, is to depend upon God for all. You all conjecture, That

First, God is an alsufficient goodness, he is goodness it self; And whatsoever good the creature is capable of, or doth actually participate, he is the sole cause thereof; means which be next at hand and near our eyes, are but pipes and stewards, but God he is the fountain and Lord.

Secondly, he hath put all Covenant good for his servants into promises. The promises are nothing else but a deed of gift, sealed with the truth of God: There hath God freely undertaken what so ever belongs to grace or glory; to this life or to that which is to come; dost thou want this or that? Why, whatsoever is fit for thee to have, that I promise in the name of my Son to give unto thee, saith God.

Now to live by faith, is to cast anchor at heaven gates, it is to cast the soul upon Gods promises in Christ, to rely on God for any good which God hath promised and undertaken; this I want, and this God hath promised; he hath undertaken the supply, and I will trust upon him for it.

Though I feel no such thing; nay, though I feel the contrary, yet I do not cast away my confidence: Though fig-trees blossome not, though olives fail, and hinds are gone, yet if my supply appears in any word of promise, I take heart and say, yet my condition is good, all is well and sure; My God hath undertaken it for me, and in his Word will I trust, which is good and true; he will not fail me, I shall have whatsoever is good, and that too in a good time: This only in general.

SECT. II

Quest. 2. Sol. To what states the life of faith may extend.

You know that there are two eminent states of our life.

1. One is spiritual, which respects all the exigences, varieties, windings, turnings, changes, defections, eclipses, tryals, and harships of the soul: Whatsoever accidents may befall an holy soul about the heavenly condition, that appertains to the spiritual state; all the supplies of grace, of strength, of comfort, of assurance, of assistance against temptations, corruptions, troubles; all enlivements and quicknings of the Spirit about all sorts of duties and services, active or passive.

2. Another is temporal, which is not only the term of our natural breathings, but also the sundry and manifold occurrences which befall us in the employments of our life; all the accidents, and interruptions, crossings, checkings, contrarieties, either in our bodies, or calling, or wealth, or persons, or children, or servants, or good name.

Briefly, the temporal state comprehends all whatsoever may weaken, or waste, or distract, all or any of our temporal contentments, delights, desires, ends; as also all our temporal suppliments for the being, or well-being of this poor and short life of ours, as health, strength, friends, food, liberty, estate, peace and quietness, &c.

Now then living by faith extends to both: The just shall live by his faith, said the Prophet, Hab. 2:4. of the Jews in the temporal state; and, I live by the faith of the Son of God, said Paul in Gal. 2:2. speaking of his spiritual state.

So that faith bears up soul and body, and is both for heaven and earth: It serves to fetch in the blood of Christ, the redemption by Christ, pardon of sin, Gods favour, all grace and comfort to the soul: And it serves to fetch in also health to the body, riches to the estate, plenty, peace, friends, what not? When I am sick, I yet trust in God for health; when poor, I yet trust on God for sufficiency; when under reproach, I yet trust on God to clear my innocency; when under discomforts and forsakements, I yet trust on God for favour and countenance: In all my distresses and reproaches, I have yet his word for my supplies and helps, upon which I rest, and thus I live by faith; so far as the promises extend, so far doth living by faith extend.

SECT. III

Quest. 3. Now more particularly what it is to live by faith on Christ.

Sol. I will tell you what I think of it; It is an holy work and course of a believing person, wherein he doth depend on Christ, and make use of

him for all the conditions and exigences of the soul about its spiritual state.

For the opening of this description; I will touch upon three things.

The particular conditions and exigences of the soul by reason of which it hath need to live by faith.

2. The fulness and fitness and fidelity of Christ for the supply and help of a believing soul.

3. The conjunction of both these together, which is the very living by faith on Christ.

First, the particular conditions and exigences of the soul: you must know this, That to live by faith presupposeth two things on our part, defect and insufficiency.

There is something lies upon us which should not, and we cannot help our selves, and therefore we go abroad by faith; this is to live upon the market.

Now there are many things which lie upon our souls.

1. The sense of guilt; this is a great matter, it makes the very heart oft-times to tremble; it is an heavy burden when a man sins against an holy and just God, the least of them provoking and damnable. This is a time of trouble; for a man sees much in debt, and nothing in stock, he is not able to pay a farthing; all that he is or can do, can never answer divine justice. This is one exigence now wich makes a man capable to live by faith, to look out to Christ, and to try what he will do for him a miserable sinner, as you shall hear anon.

2. The sense of unrighteousness: Why, God requires an holy conformity to his divine will, in heart, and in life, that our nature should be as he requires, and our wayes as he commands; but when the soul is able actively to reflect on it self, and look on God, and then

to compare what it is and hath done, with what it should be, and should have done, it is amazed at its own unrighteousness, and this is much increased; for it knows that no unrighteous person shall go to heaven; It knows that God will not pronounce unrighteous judgement; He will not acquit a man as righteous who hath not righteousness, nor shall he ever stand in judgement before him. Now this is another exigence which puts the soul upon the life of faith.

3. The times of desertion, when all the comfortable evidences of the Christian state are drawn off, as it were, when the Lord confines himself and all to his promise: The poor soul hath no spark of comfort, it hath no glimpse of divine favour, if it can find God to be his God, and Christ to be its Christ in the promises, well and good; but there is no feeling, nor handling any sensible tokens. This is another exigence.

4. The times of contrariety; when the Sun seems to be darkned, and when mercy seems to be angry, and when fidelity seems to cast off, when mindfulness seems forgetful, God seems not to regard us, but to fight against us, and Christ who did call to us to come unto him, doth seem to go away from us: O this is a strong exigence of the soul, and if ever, now must it live by faith.

5. The time of weakness: when a man sees that his work is great, and his strength is small; duties many, power little, affections dull, not able to do for Christ, not able to suffer for Christ, cannot pray, hear, receive, obey as he should, as he would; This is also an exigence of the soul wherein it needs to live by faith on Christ.

6. The times of corruption: when a man feels sin afresh; he had thought sin had been dead long ago, and all conflicts had been past; but now he perceives sin to rise like an armed man, and like a flood, even ready to bear down the soul with that hideous insolency, and violence of wicked thoughts and inclinations; yea, so great is this storm, that as they said to Christ in another case, so her Master help, or else We perish.

7. The times of temptation, which like a cross wind, bears the ship almost under water: The gates of hell seem to open themselves against the soul, and the powers of darkness fall in upon it with all the cunning of unbelief, and excitation to blasphemy; To deny God, to slight his Word, to let go our confidence in Christ, so that the poor soul is almost brought to dust and death by reason of them. This is also another exigence for the soul to make use of Christ, and to live by faith.

8. The times of contradiction: when the mouths of wicked and foolish men, like sharp rasors, wound and cut off a mans good Name; when their hands, like claws of Lyons, tear away the prey, they take away the innocency of the upright, and the estates liberties, friends, and all the earthly encouragements of the righteous; I say, this may be an exigence, for the soul to live by faith in Christ, and to make up all in him alone.

2. Now, as he who lives by faith, is (in the acting of that life) still sensible of some one of these exigences or straits of his soul; so in the second place he must be able to Behold a suitable fulness in Christ; He must know two things.

First, that Christ hath enough in him to answer all these.

Secondly, that Christ is appointed of God and willing to do it; therefore I pray you remember.

First, that Christ hath enough in him to answer all the exigences of the soul: Thy soul cannot be cast on any sea, but he is there as a sure ship and harbour; It cannot be cast upon any streight or trouble whatsoever, but Christ is able to relieve it.

1. For the sense of guilt; Why, in this there is that in Christ which can take it off: His blood is good payment, and it was shed for the remission of sins; He can make perfect peace, and satisfie to the utmost: As the least sin needs his merit, so the greatest doth not exceed it: If Christ would but offer up his soul for thine, his merits

for thy trespasses, his precious blood for thy bloody crimes: why, God will be pacified; for his blood is the blood of atonement, of reconciliation, of blotting out, of peace, &c.

2. So for unrighteousness; Why, there is that in Christ which can present thee righteous, unspotted, unblameable; which can present thee glorious without spot or wrinkle, as the Apostle speaks, Eph. 5.

He can find an ample garment without any rent, an obedience which was perfect, which God will accept, for which he will justify thee; Though thine own righteousness (for matter of judicial Justification) be as filthy rags.

3. The like may be said in a proportion to all the other exigences. Though thou be weak in grace, feeble in duty; yet he can make all grace to abound, and he can strengthen the feeble knees, and he can comfort the mourning spirit, and he can open heaven again: He can open thy eyes that thou shalt see thy God again; yea, and as thou hast done formerly, as thy God: yea, he can conquer the busiest corruption, and put by thy strongest temptation, and stand by thee in the bitterest opposition.

2. Nay, and Christ is both appointed of God to be, and do all this for the believer, and is very willing. He is made unto us of God, (saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 1:30.) wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption: therefore is he called the born of salvation, the justifier of his people, the Standard to which we should repair, the strength of them that trust in him, in a word, he was invested a Mediator with his triple office, of Priest, and Prophet, and King, to be, and to do all this for such as are believers.

Thou dost not mistake thy self, nor misconceive of God or Christ, when thou goest to the Lord Jesus in any of thy streits, then to be a Priest for thee, or to be a Prophet for thee, or to be a King unto thee. O no, God hath appointed him to be the Saviour of his body to be the

head of his Church: and Christ, who was thus ably invested, is as willing and faithful to discharge and perform.

3. These things being to be known and granted, there follows in the third place the conjunction of these two together, which indeed is the very living by faith upon Christ.

When the soul is in any exigence, and comes to Christ, and puts it self upon him, and trusts to him for help, this is to live by faith on Christ. Suppose a person sensible of much guilt, many sinful commissions, or omissions lay heavy and sore upon him; he is grieved at heart that he hath so dishonoured God: take them off he is not able, and therefore he renounceth all in himself; to Christ he goes and saith thus, O blessed Lord Jesus, thou didst shed thy pretious blood for the remission of sins: thou hast offered me thy self, and all thy precious purchases and benefits; I have by faith accepted of thee, of thee alone, with all my soul to be my Lord and Saviour; Now none in heaven or earth can procure me the pardon of these sins, but thy self, and thou canst do it; I beseech thee that thy blood may be mine atonement to thy father; yea, I will, and do cast my soul upon thee, thee alone, for the pardon, and I will trust unto thee for the discharge, of my many, of all my transgressions; Thy blood is the price that I will trust to, and rest upon. This is to live by faith in Christ in that particular; yea, though the sense of guilt be great, and the truth of it undeniable; yet to believe the pardon in Christ, and to offer his satisfactions; yea to adventure, and to roll the soul upon him for it: for Christ hath called me, and he hath said that he will ease me, &c.

So again, suppose that thou feelest corruptions strongly working, and temptations grievously assaulting; now to live by faith on Christ, is to come unto him (knowing the Kingly power of his grace) and to beseech him to subdue iniquities for thee, and to send forth the rod of his Scepter, the power of his gracious Spirit; to mortifie thy lusts yet more, and to trust upon him, that he will do this for thee, and therefore thou wilt apply thy self, with patience and confidence to the

use of all consecrated wayes and means, through which Christ will manifest that power unto thy soul. I thank God through Jesus Christ, said Paul, Rom. 7. As if he should say, I am not able for my life to root out, to beat down these vile motions, but I cast my self upon Jesus Christ, I trust unto him, and verily believe he will deliver me; the like may be said of all the other exigences, but I cannot repeat all.

Consider that the habit or quality of faith is one thing, and the use or exercise of faith is another thing; the soul then lives by faith on Christ, when it improves its interest in Christ, when it can trust to him to supply all its wants; a man is said to live by bread, not when he hath it in his Cupboard, but when he takes and eats it; and a man is said to live upon his money, not when he lets it to lie dead in his chest, but when he turns and winds it for his benefit and support. So here to live by faith on Christ, is to put faith to work; my works are in my self, but the supplies of my soul are in Christ; as I go to divine providence, and put my self on its faithful powerful goodness for my body; so I must go to the Lord Jesus, and put my self on his gracious and certain fulness for my soul.

Yet observe a few things, for the clearer opening of this.

1. To live by faith on Christ, it is more then a meer complaining of our man's, or an acknowledging of his fulness. To see scarcity in the house, and plenty in the Market, this may be, and it may be vain, unless we go forth to fetch in the promises.

Whiles the soul keeps home, it lives not by faith: The life of faith lies abroad: a man may have grace to see his wants, and yet he lives not by faith, till he can get out unto Christ. I will go to the Prophet, to the man of God, said the woman who had a troubled spirit for her dead child; Yea, this recovered her child again: If I can but touch the hem of his garment I shall be whole, said the in the Gospel; you must bring the pitcher to the well, if you will have water, and the Childs mouth must be applyed to the breast, if it would have milk; and the

soul must go unto Christ, it must approach unto him, or else it is but a fruitless trouble, it is not a living by faith on him.

2. To live by faith on Christ, it is more then a meer going to Christ; though the motion of the soul out of it self be required, yet that alone is not sufficient. If I go to a man for to lend me an hundred pound, if either I will not speak to him, or trust him, this is labour loft; so, though we do address our selves to Christ for help, but will not trust upon him for supply, this is not yet to live by faith. For,

The life of faith on Christ is raised by three things.

First, his fulness.

Secondly, his goodness.

Thirdly, his faithfulness; And all these enduce the soul to trust unto him: he is able enough, Ergo, I will trust him; he is ready enough, therefore I will trust him; he is faithful, and will certainly do me good, therefore I will trust him. So that to live by faith, it is to live by trust; one is said to live by trust, when he hath nothing from another, but his word, or his bond; I think him honest, or I have him fast bound, therefore I will trust him. Thou hast the Word of Christ, and the Promise of Christ, which is a sure truth, to which, if thou dost trust, thou dost live by faith. If I feel and do not complain, if I complain and do not pray, if I pray and do not trust, this is not yet to live by faith; so far as I can trust upon Christ, that he will supply and help my soul, so far! do live by faith.

3. Nay, Thirdly, to live by faith, is not only to trust upon Christ for supply, but it is to expect the performance.

There is a great difference 'twixt the life of sense, and the life of faith: Sense is opposite to expectation; it is only for the present, what it hath, that makes it up, it lives upon no stock but that in hand, but faith reckons its estate more from what lies in bonds, then what the person finds in the purse: It finds the greatest part of the souls estate

yet in the promises, and yet in Christ, and in both graciously, and assuredly undertaken; where upon it doth make the soul not only to go to Christ, but to trust him, and not only so, but to expect and wait patiently; he doth hear me, he will do me good, he will not suffer sin to have dominion, he will send forth the rod of his power, he will make all grace to abound, he will not leave nor forsake me, he will satisfie for me, his intercession shall be effectual, I shall yet feel the power of his death, the vertue of his resurrection.

As to pray and not to trust, so to trust and not to expect, to trust and then to murmur, to trust and to untrust, whiles we are speaking, to get the soul to put it self upon Christ, and before we have done speaking, to pluck off the soul again, to deface our own sealing, to cast away our confidence, this is ill, very ill:

It is true that the acts of faith are capable of weakness, and also of opposition; one man may more confidently trust and expect, and another less; sometimes the same man is more pure and high in the act of trusting, and sometimes he hath much ado with his heart, to get it to roll it self on Christ; but yet he doth do it against many fears, and against many corrupt reasonings; now he lives by faith, but then know it is an ill business instantly to reverse the acts of faith, faint in it, or but to suspect Jesus Christ himself, either in his power, or goodness or truth.

Fourthly, to live by faith on Christ, it is an extensive work, it is to trust on him, not for one thing only, but for every thing, which concerns the state of the soul. The soul is a needy thing, naturally it is so, and so it is spiritually; either it needs grace, or more grace, or strength, or comfort, of peace, or mercy, and pardon, some thing or other it wants; now Christ is an adequate supply to the soul, he hath grace enough, and righteousness enough, and power enough, and peace, and plenteous redemption: Now then as our wants appear, or as they multiply, so must faith appear and abound in its acts, if we will be said to live by faith.

I will be righteousness to thee saith Christ, and I will trust upon thee for it saith faith; I will be sanctification to thee saith Christ, and I will trust upon thee for it saith faith; I will be redemption to thee saith Christ, and I will trust unto thee for that too, saith faith, yea, I will trust upon thee to be my continual propitiation, continual intercession, to be my continual sufficiency and strength for more grace, for quickning, for comfort, for salvation, for all.

Doth corruption work again? and I will to Christ again to subdue it, he will do it for me; doth Satan renew his temptations? and I will renew my addresses to Christ, who will again (I trust) bruise him under my feet; my comforts are gone, but I will to Christ, I will live upon him, he will come again, and then my joy shall be full.

And indeed the life of faith, as it is a multiplied work, (for it makes the soul to live upon Christ for its manifold grace,) so it is a repeated work; it leads on the soul often and often even for the same kinds of supplies.

Obj. O saith the soul, I did go to Christ, and did beseech him to rebuke Satan, and I trusted on him, and followed my suit, and found it so; but now Satan tempts again, now sin works again, now my heart is down again, dull, and dead and feeble again.

Answ. I say to such an one, to live by faith, is to keep house with Christ, it is to be a daily guest; is to relie upon him, it is so often to come as we have need, it is to draw water often from the same fountain: As if Christ did say to a person, Whatsoever thy soul needs, come to me for it, and whensoever, yet come, I will do it for thee, and the heart goes confidently to the Lord of its life, and hope of its salvation.

SECT. IV

Quest. 4. What Arguments do move us not only to get faith in Christ, but also to live by it?

Sol. They are so many, that I know not well where to begin.

First, If we consider our own condition, this might put us upon the life of faith.

First, the life of faith is congruous to our condition: for what is our condition, but a depending being, such a being as subsists upon, and by another?

Take us as creatures, and so we are but beams of light, which the Sun lets forth, supports, contracts, draws in; We are like a glass which God doth frame, and hold in his own hand, or else we cannot stand; or like the flowers they must be set in the ground, and then watered, and fenced, or else they live not: our whole being, and working, and maintenance is from him that made us; In him we live, and move, and have our being.

And, take us as new creatures, so shall we find that not only our natural breath, but our spiritual being, not only life, but grace too, depends not on him who hath it, but on God who gave it; Grace is a sweet stream, but that flows and runs still, because still fed by a living spring. It is a fruitful branch, but that branch doth stand and bear, because upheld and supplied by a more fruitfull root: Hence is it that Christ is called the head, and we the members; he is called the root, and we the branches; he the foundation-stone, we the building; he is called the rock, we the house built on that rock; he the husband, we the wife and spouse; he the Lord, and we the servants; he the Shepherd, and we the sheep; he the nurse, and we the babes; All which do evidence this much, that our life is in him, upon him, for we are dependants; from him we live, therefore upon him we should live.

Secondly, the necessity of our condition: our condition here below doth so shift, and vary, and fail, go and come, that if we do not live by faith, we cannot (honestly) live at all: Help failed me on every side said David, all men for look me, said Paul: We know not what to do

said Jehosaphat: God is pleased to call off all our comforts, to gather up into his own hands of promises all our supports. It is with us many times as with a Ship laden, but on a sudden broken to pieces, now the persons of necessity must swim towards the shore, and to the rocks: So God doth dash in pieces our lower confidences; he cracks a full estate, he separates very friends; he gives not a heart to people to shew us compassion; and sorrows on all sides pour in themselves, a man hath nothing in all the world left him, but Gods bond, his word of promise.

So for the estate of the soul, it is frequently so clouded, so darkned, so checked, so distressed, so assaulted, that all the means under heaven do not relieve it; if the Lord doth not help, if Christ be not the rock, it cannot be delivered or supported.

Now in such cases, where the condition is wholly reduced to the promises, or unto Christ, there can be no living but by faith: The heart of a man is either broken with despair and grief, or will break into the wayes of wickedness, if it lives not by faith in the cases of all sensible sequestrations: For,

1. It is only faith which can espy something for the soul now: Who is he that sits in darkness and sees no light? let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God? Isa. 50:10. Faith can see the stars in the thickest night of darkness; there is nothing but faith which can tell the soul of rich mercy in the times or greatest sense of exceeding guilt; and there is nothing but faith which can find out fulness of grace in Christ for a soul which is bitterly sensible of its wonderful and continual emptiness. Till the Angel came and opened Hagers eyes to see the fountain, she gave up her child for dead; so unless we have faith to open our eyes to see the fountain of grace and mercy in God and Christ, I tell you that in many of our exigences we shall throw away all, all as dead and lost, and hopeless.

2. Again, It is nothing but faith which gives spirit unto us from a bare premise: one word of God is security enough to faith. If a Marriner

can get to the top of the Mast, and descry but a point of land, he is now glad, all is well; faith is said to see the premises afar off, Heb. 11. well saith faith to the soul now, as Paul to them which sailed with him, Be of good cheer, thou shalt yet do well; grace, and mercy, and help will come, God hath promised it, and Christ will make all the promises, Yea and Amen; and now the soul lives because of that good and faithful word, &c.

Secondly, If we consider God himself, there is sufficient reason why we should live by faith.

There be six arguments which we may behold in God, to invite and perswade us to live by faith.

First, his Alsufficiency, I am God alsufficient, said he to Abraham, What's that? That is, I am an absolute and independent essence in respect of my self, infinitely perfect and enough, and have enough and enough to satisfie all the world. Take all the particular creatures in the world, and view into their natures and conditions, you shall find every one of them to be imperfect, to be depending, to be replenished with wants: even one man for his own particular is covered over with innumerable wants; the wants of his soul are many, so of his body, so of his estate; what then, and how many are the necessities of every man? But now God is alsufficient (that is) he hath enough to supply every man; He can open his hands, fill every living thing. Thou openest thy hand (said David, Psal. 145:15.) and satisfiest the desire of every living things; and he is able to make all grace abound, saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 9:8. He is rich to all that call upon him, Rom. 10:12. He is able to do (Eph. 3:20.) exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ, Phil. 4:19. The Sun you see hath light enough for a whole world, and a fountain hath water enough for a whole countrey; Why, all good is in God, both originally, and eminently, and causally, (that is) he is goodness it self, and all goodness, fulness without want, strength without weakness, holiness without blemish; yea, and the universal cause of

goodness, and therefore infinitely able to supply, and help, and do good: there is no one necessity, but he is able infinitely to succour it; and many, yea, all necessities are not to be compared to the unfathomed greatness, and exceedingness of his fulness and alsufficiency.

2. His Command: As God is an absolute and full good, (all our helps do center in him as in their compleat cause) so he hath commanded us to live upon his al-sufficiency by faith. How often do you read those charges, Trust upon the Lord, commit thy way to the Lord, rest upon him, stay upon the God of Jacob, cast thy care on him. As if God should say unto the sons of men, I am he, and there is none else besides me who can do you good; there is not any good in all the world which you want but I am able to supply it; I am alsufficient for wisdom, for holiness, for mercy, for power, for grace, for comfort, for peace. If you want water, you would go to the Spring: and if you want light, you would look up to the Sun; and if you want any good, why will you not look up to me who am goodness it self? I till you, that I am a God, and have the greatness and the fulness of a God; Nay, and I charge and require you, when you need any thing, come to me for it: I am the Master of all the families of the earth, and the Lord of all good; It is my express will, that you come unto me, and that you put your trust on me, that you believe on my alsufficiency, that you live upon that stock which is in my fulness: Nay, I shall take it exceeding ill, if you rest your selves, or live on any other.

3. His promises: Consider this two wayes.

1. Generally, his promises of good, wherein is ground to trust.

2. Particularly, His promises to them that will and do trust, Psal. 37:3. Trust in the Lord, and verily, &c. Isa. 26:3. Thus wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee: So Isa. 57:13. This puts life to all the rest: for though God were never so able to do good, and though his commands were never so urgent to live on him for all our good; yet if he had not made over

this good unto us, we might maintain secret fears and discouragements: But now God hath promised all good unto us, (that is) he hath firmly and graciously made it over; As if he should say, All the good that I can do, I will do it for thee; all the ample fulness in me, is to replenish thee, it is to supply thy wants and necessities; and I assure thee in the word of a God it is so. Psalm 84:11. The Lord is a Sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly. Ver. 12. O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee. There is not any one particular want (which is fit to be stiled a want, and fit to be supplied in this life, for soul) but God hath by promises particularly engaged all his sufficiency to help and supply it. Dost thou want an holy heart, returning heart, an heart to have sin, to mourn for sin, a believing heart, an upright heart, a meek and patient heart, a joyful heart? dost thou want any grace, more grace, pardon of sin, assurance of pardon, strength against sin, strength for any duty, active or passive? wantest thou any convenient and fit good for thy body, for thy name, for thy estate, for thy children, for thy family? any good for life, at death, after death? Not any one of these which God hath not distinctly promised. If you knew a man to be sufficient, to have an estate worth ten thousand pounds, and all free, you will presently trust him for an hundred pounds; or if such an one should command any in his need to come to him, and borrow, this would draw many to him; but if he should take a man out particularly, and say to him, Friend, my estate is thus great, I have a great estate, and I pray thee if thou needest any thing at any time, repair to me, I give thee my word, and if that be not enough, thou shalt have bond and seal that I will help thee; it were enough, he needed not to say more, he will to him I warrant you. Thus saith the Lord to a believer, to one who hath accepted of his Son Jesus Christ, saith God to him, I tell thee by my Word, (which is truth it self and cannot lie, nor deceive) that I am a great God, alsufficiency, goodness is in me in infinite perfection, and I am able to do thee any good; now my will is, that thou shouldst come unto me at any time, in any of thy distresses, and I do promise thee, that will not with-hold any good thing from thee; As true as I am

God, I will not leave thee nor forsake thee; should not this encourage us to live by faith?

4. His power and ability; as we want much good, so God doth undertake all good: And this is another encouragement, that God never over-engageth himself; he is able to make good all his undertakings: Many a man is undone by sureship, he suffers himself to be bound beyond his ability; it is not so with God.

This is granted, that at the least a proportionable power is necessary to give being to all promises and undertakings; goodness and kindness are enough to make a promise, but ability is also required to make good that promise. If a subject promiseth to release, or pardon a Malefactor, why, this is nothing, he is not to be trusted; why, because he hath not power of life or death; if a poor man promise to discharge a debt of four hundred thousand pounds; why, no man will trust to his undertakings: why, because he hath no ability, he hath not an estate answerable, he is not able to pay twenty shillings; so that power gives ground to trusting, because power is a necessary ingredient to all.

Now then, God hath ability enough to make good all or any of his promises.

Obj. You will say, his promises are many.

Sol. I answer, as our needs are many, so his promises are many; But then, as his promises are many, so his goodness is great, and his power infinite; now an infinite goodness, and an infinite power, are able to make good, not only many, but infinite promises.

Objection. You will say; that the things promised are great.

Sol. I confess they are, God hath undertaken great matters, to pardon great sins, to convert great sinners, to conquer great temptations, to convey great consolations: But is he not a great God? Is any thing too hard for him? nothing is impossible with God.

Obj. But you will say, that particular wants still increase, and renew themselves.

Sol. So they do, as the vessels which we fill to day, require a new filling to morrow, and the stomachs which we seem to satisfy now, within few hours they are empty and craving: But then, though the vessel may be dry; yet the fountain is not: though the vessel may be empty, yet the fountain is full and still streaming. As Gods goodness is a living fountain, so his promises are a perpetual bond; They are continued undertakings, and depend upon an unexhausted and infinite depth of goodness, Isa. 46:3. O house of Jacob, which are born by me from the belly, and carried from the womb, Ver. 4 Even to the old age I am he, and even to hoary hairs I will carry you.

Obj. But yet you will say: yea, but God is engaged to so many; there is not a believer, but God hath bound himself by many promises to him.

Sol. I confess, with man often-times this is something; He hath but a particular ability, and therefore may overshoot himself by general engagements; But with God it is not so, in whom power and ability to make good what he undertakes, is not contracted, broken, limited, depending, but ample, unlimited, and all-sufficient from himself. Therefore he is said to reserve mercy for thousands, and his promises run to Abraham and to all his seed. Why, the power of God, by which he is able to make good all his promises, it is a creating power, such a power as can (upon the pleasure of his will) command thing into being; and it is an overtopping power: God alone can command our helps, he needeth not the assistance of any to make good his undertakings; and it is an enduring power: it abides for ever, His hand is never shortened, that it cannot save. Is the Lords hand waxed shortened (said God himself to Moses? Numb. 11:23.) Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass or not. So then, as God hath engaged himself to do us good, so he is able enough to make that good.

5. His fidelity and truth: As the promises, for the matter of them, are full of goodness: so for the form of them, they are sealed with truth: God who cannot lie hath promised, said the Apostle, Titus 1:2. and it is impossible for him to lie, Heb. 6:18.

Truth and fidelity may be conjectured to consist in three things; I speak now of them as applied to promises.

1. In reality of intention: Where the declaration is a fair letter, and the intention is a blur; when that is large, and this is nothing; this may be a complemental lie, but it is not truth; the expression must be but the intention cloathed in words; It must be the purpose of the heart transcribed, if we will stile it truth and fidelity. Now when God promiseth any good to a believer, this is not vox & præter ea nihil: a meer showr of eloquent and comfortable words: O no, it is his will and intention, and very purpose made known: He doth indeed intend that good which he undertakes, and speaks of in his promises.

2. In a constancy of resolution: As falshood is placed not only in present incongruities, (when heart and tongue are a variance) but also in subsequent inconstancies: As when, though my present intention and expression were parallel, yet afterward, like a rotten bottome which slips aside from the house, so my heart breaks away from it self, it becomes an heart and an heart, as in Sauls promise to David, which changed presently, &c. On the contrary is it with truth, and in particular with Gods truth about his promises to believers; His word of promise doth answer his purpose at first (for as he thought and intended, so did he speak) and that purpose still answers it self, and therefore he hath sworn by himself, that he will not alter the thing that is gone forth of his lips: My Covenant shall stand fast; Psal. 89:34, 28.

3. In a certainty of execution: As when a person hath promised to lend, or give an hundred pounds, he being free take his own time, comes and layes it down and faith, Lo here is the money which I promised to lend or give, take it; this is fidelity or truth. Such a truth

is there in Gods promises: This is not all the truth of them, that for certain God hath spoken such good things: but further, that he will assuredly perform them: Behold the dayes come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Jacob, Jer. 33:14.

6. His performance of them to them that have lived by faith. When persons have committed themselves and their conditions unto him; when they have trusted upon his word, he hath not failed them, he hath made it good. Abraham, he did live by faith, when God promised him a Son; the text saith, that he did believe, he did not consider his own body, but gave glory to God, in resting upon the sole goodness, fidelity, and strength of his promise, and God did indeed perform the same unto him. Not any of the Kings of Israel and Judah, but expresly sped well, when in their exigences they did trust unto God. Our fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them, they trusted in thee, and were not confounded, Psalm 22:4, 5. The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusted in him, and I was helped, faith David, Psal. 28:7. The Lord shall help them and deliver them, (speaking of the righteous) and save them, because they trust in him, Psal. 37:40. Now put all together, should we not live by faith, trust upon God in Christ (and through, and for Christ) for all our helps of soul, who is, 1. An alsufficient fountain. 2. Who commands us in unto himself for our helps. 3. Who hath promised all good unto us if we will but trust him. 4. Who is able enough to make good whatsoever he promiseth. 5. Who cannot and will not lie, deceive or fail us. 6. Who hath given testimony of his truth in all ages; Who hath performed his oath to Jacob, and remembered his mercy to Abraham; who hath been ever in all ages mindful of his Covenant to such as durst by faith live upon him and trust in him.

Thirdly, consider the qualities of this life of faith, and these may much prevail with us to labour to live upon God in Christ by faith.

There be four ingredients in this kind of life, all which are admirable, and indeed they are peculiar priviledges of it.

1. It is the only Christian life.
2. It is the only comfortable life.
3. It is the only getting and thriving life.
4. It is the only certain and stedfast life.

1. The life of faith, it is the only Christian life. The Christian hath a life common with many creatures; his life of eating and drinking, of nourishing and growth, it is such a life, as the beasts live as well as he; his life of reason and labour, that also is such a life which all men live as well as he; but the life of faith, that is singular and proper to the believer; for no man hath that faith which the true believer hath; and no man hath his estate so in heaven, so in Gods hands, so inclosed and treasured in the Covenant of promises, as he. What Christ spake to his Disciples about this very matter, Mat. 6:31. Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewith shall we be cloathed? Ver. 32. For after all these things do the Gentiles seek: As if he should say; it is enough for meer sinners, for such as have not God to be their God, who cannot in Christ call him Father, it is enough for them to lead such a vexing and distrustful life. That I say here, Why, it is enough for men of this life, the men of this world, for them who have their only portion here, to live the life of sense, to be scraping, to be plodding, to be vexing their thoughts and hearts, how to compass, how to fetch in, how to lengthen an estate; To have a God, and yet to live without him: a Christ, and not to live upon him: as if either were nothing in this Christian; But for the Believer, who hath a God, and a Christ, and all good undertaken for him by a full and faithful Covenant; It is his life now to trust upon his God, to rely upon his Saviour, to quiet himself in Gods Word of promise. As Christ spake in another case, If you love them that love you, and if ye do good to them that do good unto you, what singular thing do you? do not even the Publicans and sinners the same? That I say in this case, if ye will make up your own estate, if ye will live upon what you see, and what you taste, and what you

handle, and go not above, and beyond these and your selves; do not sinners, do not the worst of sinners do the same; If the vilest person can rejoyce when his table is full, and hang down his head when sensibiles go off; wherein doth the believer exceed him, who is merry and cheerful only in a sensible plenty, and his heart is ready to break in the ebbe and substraction of that, by the dayes or years of scarcity and sensible distress? If thou didst look upon God as thy Father, and Christ as thy plentiful redemption, and the promises as a goodly portion, and thine inheritance; then the dayes of tears to others, would be hours of thankfulness unto thee; and the nights of fears to others, would be times of sweet repose and contentment unto thee: When the spiders web was swept away, yet thou couldst see the house standing and sure; even in all sensible abstractions of the olive, and vine, and stalls, thou couldst yet rejoyce in the God of thy salvation. For the place of thy defence is the munition of rocks, bread shall be given unto thee, and thy waters shall be sure, Isaiah 33:16.

I observe a threefold difference 'twixt an unbeliever and a believer.

One is in the very estate: for the believer hath a far better portion then the unbeliever; he hath a portion set out for this life, and a portion also for a better, he hath food for his body and grace for his soul.

Another is in the manner of setling the estate: for general providence relieves the one, and special affection provides for the other.

The one is helped by common goodness of universal kindness, and the other is undertaken for, and secured by a singular bond of Covenant. God hath made over himself and all his goodness unto him in his Son Jesus Christ: He hath taken upon himself all the care, and all the good, and only wills the believer to be upright, and diligent, and so to trust upon him; he hath settled all his grace, and strength, and comfort in Christ, &c.

A third is in the manner of managing: The unbeliever, he will, like the prodigal, have all the estate into his own hands, he will trust upon himself, he dares not settle on God, for he fears him, he suspects him, he thinks verily God will not do him good, but he will fail: But the believer knows whom he hath trusted, God is his God; and hath undertaken for him, and he who hath promised is faithfull, who will also do it: Now though I have not in hand, yet I have in promise; though I have not in the coffer, yet I have in the bonds; my estate is even all that is good for me, and it lies in a sure hand, in the hand of my good God who will not fail; Hereupon I live, to this I trust: though others vex, and fret, and curse, yet I sit down quietly; Why, because faith goes about what we see, and it is able to see the estate large enough, though lying in divine promises; and this is to live like a Christian, for this is to acknowledge a God, and a Christ to some purpose.

2. The life of faith, it is the only comfortable life.

It is with our life, as it is with fire; which if it burns fair and clear, then is it pleasant and delightful; but if it be dull and smoaking, it makes us weary both of it, and the room. Whiles faith doth guide our lives, (by settling our thoughts and desires on God and Christ) then the lamp is clear, life feels like life: we can pray with joy, and hear with delight, and follow our callings with cheerfulness and lie down in peace; But if you sever faith from the life, that we dare not to trust on God; nor rest on Christ; we must possess, or else we cannot trust nor live; Now the chimney smoaks, the soul becomes displeasing to it self; the soul craves help from the body, and the body from the soul; but neither is able to help either, and therefore this is wanting, and this is vexing. The waves now get over the ship, and sink it with a load and deluge of worldly, endless, fruitless, anxious, vexing cares, and fears; And in sober-sadness tell me, what you think of such a life, wherein the head is disturbed and curiously tortured with variety of manifold and exquisite suspitions, and thoughts, and the heart is deeply racked with the continual breakings of trembling sighs and griefs? that a man is not able to get, nor yet patient to want; he can

neither give himself help, nor will he trust him who can; That his estate is burdened, with many wants, and all this is made unspeakably grievous by another worse burden of unbelieving thoughts; that a man sees he cannot bear, and yet will not ease his shoulder by trusting. That a man cannot begin to think, but his thoughts throw him into the way of what if, What if the Lord will not do me good? what if I cannot have that? what if such an one fail? or, what if it comes not on such a day? &c. So that he cannot think without tumults; nor speak without discontents, nor eat without dislike, nor walk without slavishness, nor work without distrustfulness, nor sleep without terrors, nor awake without bitterness, nor rise without carefulness; and amidst all this, he hath no heart to duty, nor to God, nor to heaven, nor earth, nor to Christ, nor to himself, nor his; for either he hath no faith, or else will not live by it; He dares not trust God, or Christ.

There be three things which concur to make the life uncomfortable;

1. One is a sense of want: A man hath an extream feeling of need: no sense, or slight sense, avail not to break our spirits.
2. Another is a strong desire, the heart pants and reacheth after the supply, and this multiplies thoughts and cares.
3. A third is palpable insufficiency; that a man cannot for his life compass his desires and supplies, and therefore like Ahab, who was impeached for Naboths vineyard, he is dejected and grieved; all which fall ordinarily into the life of unbelief.

But now to wheel about on the contrary, the life of faith is sweet and comfortable.

Four things would make a mans life very comfortable.

1. One is if he were eased of all burdens.
2. Another, if he were secured from all prejudices.

3. A third, if what he had were very good and enough.

4. A fourth, if he were assured that whatsoever good he should need, of that he should be without fail supplied in a fit time.

Now then the life of faith produceth all these.

1. It caseth a man of all burdens: There be but two burdens which we can well think of 1. One is the sinful burden. 2. The other is the earthly burden: The burden of guilt, and the burden of cares: But faith (if a man could live by it) takes them both off: It lives upon Christ for the one, and upon Gods providence for the other: It sees a sufficiency and an accepted price in his blood to remit our guilt, and it sees an al-sufficient, careful, faithful providence to remove our care; And I tell you, that the soul comes to great ease which is released of both these: Son, be of good comfort, thy sins be forgiven thee. Sin shall be discharged, therefore I am comfortable; cares are gone, therefore I am cheerfull.

2. It secures against all prejudices, and why? because it states the person in goodness it self, in him who is nothing but goodness, (that is) who is in respect of himself good, and who will order all things for good to the Believer, nay, and in his hands who is an absolute Lord.

'Tis true, that one change in our estate may be contrary to another, and because we esteem one of them to be good, therefore we judge the other to be evil: but then, though changes be opposite in sense, yet they are concordant in issue, in the event all falls out for good. As sickness though opposite to health, yet it may fall out for the further preservation of life; sometimes the Christian is high, sometimes low; sometimes he is in a freed state, sometimes in a clouded state; sometimes he is in conquest, sometimes he is in conflict; sometimes he is oyled in the mouths of men, and sometimes traduced and torn in pieces, as if the tongues of Christians were the teeth of Lions: (Paul gives a Catalogue of his changes in these and the like cases;) yet in all and after all, the Christians condition is not prejudiced. God

still owns the person, watching over his safeties; Keeps all poyson from the heart, and like a ship (sometimes by fair wind, sometime by a rough storm) he still brings him safe to harbour. As Paul spake even of kis bonds that they fell out to the furtherance of the Gospel; So I say of the calamitous occurrences, the sense sees nothing but misery, yet faith can see the good end which God made with Job, and therefore to rejoyce in troubles.

3. It makes the present condition good, and enough. I will tell you one reason why the life of sense is uncomfortable; namely, because it is grounded on a short and empty good; that which a man can see with his eye, and hold in his hand, is not half of that which he can desire with his heart, no worldly thing can ever be enough to an unbelieving heart. But faith makes the soul well pleased, because it presents the soul with such a good, as cannot only satisfie, but also exceed it. God is an infinite goodness; he, who can satisfie more then a world, may well content one mans heart; and Gods favour is a satisfying good, (I shall be satisfied with thy favour, said David;) and to this doth faith entitle, yea, this it doth reveal to the soul; And I will tell you one thing, that he who cannot be contented with a God, and his favour, with a Christ, and his blood; with a Covenant, and its fulness; he will never be content with any thing; if alsufficiency be not enough to thee, when can emptiness and vanity please and satisfie thee. What if a man hath but a little Garden, yet if he hath a large Park, and ten thousand Acres of Arables, & the Kings royal favour to grace all this? I tell you this would sparkle his spirit, it would breath a well pleasedness in him. Thou complainest that thou hast but little of earthly things; I grant it, and a little may be enough: (enough depends more on quality, then quantity) but then, though the Garden be but small, yet the Park is large; though thy portion in externals be not so great, yet this with a great & al-sufficient God, & a blessed Saviour, and a heaven to boot, is enough, and enough. If the wife saith she hath but a small joynture, yet if she hath a rich and tender husband, she is to be blamed if she saith she hath not enough: Faith views the Christians estate, not as it is in its hand, but as in her husbands hand, in Christs, and then all is well enough.

4. It assures of universal and reasonable supplies: The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want, so David, Psal. 23:1. follow him a little in that Psalm, and you shall see what God hath done for him; he made his pastures green, and his waters still, vers. 2. O what a freshness, and what a calmness doth faith make in the state; His soul is taken care for, and at the worst, when he was in the valley of the shadow of death, yet he was quieted from fear, because his faith saw God there; yea, and found him there to uphold and comfort: That for what was past; Then for his present condition, see ver. 5. His table is prepared for him, as if he took no care (no anxious care) he needed not to trouble himself, (thou preparest a table for me) and not a mean table neither (my cup runneth over) nor yet a dull and uncheerful table, (thou anointest my head with oyl;) so that faith for the present finds food, and cheer enough too; But then for the future condition, will this hold out? See what faith finds in reversion, ver. 6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the dayes of my life; (Goodness) perhaps that respected his temporal estate, (Mercy!) perhaps that respected his spiritual, 1. One his body. 2. Another his soul, and both these (shall follow him) as the shadow that follows the body, they should be still at hand; but how long? not for a day only, but (all his dayes) not all the dayes of his dignities, abilities, health, but all the dayes of his life.

Nay, yet again, (surely) they shall follow me: It was not a speech of fancy, but of certainty, it was out of all doubt, and peradventure; Surely mercy and goodness shall, &c. So Psal. 84:11. The Lord God is a Sun, and a shield; the Sun is the parent of light, so is God of all good; The Sun is the cause of all fruitfulness and cheerfulness, so is God of all blessings: and he is a shield to a Sun for the doing of good, and a shield to secure and protect from evil. The Lord will give grace and glory: Grace is the best thing which a man can have on earth and Glory is the highest thing which a man can have in heaven: But these he will give, they shall not be bought, but freely bestowed. No good thing will he withhold, &c. As if he should say, if grace be not enough for earth, if glory be not enough for heaven; think then of any other good thing; there is not any other good thing, which shall be

withheld (that is) which shall not, like the rain, (which ceaseth to be withheld) pour down upon you.

Will you hear the Prophet say a word to this; to this future supplies for them who live by faith: then read Jer. 17:7. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is: Here we find the believer at his work of trusting, or living by faith, and at his wages too: Blessed is the man that trusteth, &c. Indeed the Prophet speaks a great word, he is blessed; more cannot be said; but let's see how he proves that? ver. 8. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river; and shall not see when heat cometh, but his leaf shall be green, and shall not be carefull in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. If faith plants the tree in a springing soyl, if it beholds the tree to spread, and grow, and bear in all weathers, though heat cometh in all times, though drought cometh, yet the leaf is green and fruitful, and ceaseth not to yield; doth it not then assure us of supply for the future? hath it not a good Store-house, an ample treasury for the believer?

What should I say more! may not faith say that to the soul, which God hath said to faith? if so, then we may well rejoyce for the present, and be void of care for the future; for God hath said I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, Heb. 13:5. Thou hast mercy, and still shalt have mercy; Thou hast grace, and shalt still have grace; Thy part in Christ, and still shalt have it: supplies of all good, and still shalt have them.

3. The life of faith is the only getting and thriving life. What the Apostle spake of godliness, that we may say of Faith; It is great gain: for it hath the promises of this life, and of the life which is to come.

Profit is that which most men look upon: it is the cry of most, who will shew us any good? and faith hath a singular art of getting. I observe that the good of a Christian in some respect hangs in the promises, as water doth in the clouds: and look as the boysterous winds rather drive away the clouds and rain (though a few drops may

slip down) but it is the sweet heat of the Sun which makes the clouds to open themselves, and give out their store.

So the only way to drive away the promises, (as it were) to remove them with their blessings, is, not to believe, not to trust: and the only way to make them to yield out their precious treasures, is, to believe, to live by faith: Take a place for either, Jer. 17:5. Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. As the Lord of Samaria. Ver. 6. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited. Psal 37:39. The salvation of righteousness is of the Lord, he is their strength in the time of trouble, ver. 40. And the Lord shall keep them and deliver them, &c. and save them because they trust in him.

The soul oft-times bitterly complains, that as yet it hath not that good thing, it sticks yet in the hands of God, Christ can do it if he will. Why, but if ever thou wouldst speed, thou must trust; I dare not trust though, saith the soul: how then canst thou speed? Why then dost thou complain? God and Christ undertakes thy good; but then he requires this of thee, do but trust me for it and thou shalt speed, I will not fail thee, I have sworn by my self that I will not alter, nor repent. The poor man comes to Christ and cries out for help, Mark 9 O Lord, saith he, if thou canst do anything, &c. Why; saith Christ, I can do any thing, I am able enough, and willing enough, that's not the thing: this is it which will make thee to speed; canst thou believe, darest thou to trust upon me? he answered Lord I believe, I do trust, and you know that his son was presently healed. The child comes to the father, Father supply me, I will saith the father; but I will have it instantly; if he had asked and trusted his father, he might have sped, but because he doth ask and murmur with his father, he is therefore justly denied.

There are two things which mightily oblige a person to the doing of a kindness; one is his own promise, another is his friends confidence,

who hath upon the security of his word adventured; so here, besides the very inclination of the divine goodness to make good its own undertakings, this also adds not a little to our speed, and furtherance, that we rely only on God. It is a common complaint, that we cannot be answered: I reply, it is a common fault, that God nor Christ can be trusted. It is not how many wants thou feelest, nor how many promises thou readest, nor how many prayers thou makest; If with all this thou dost not ask in faith, think not (O man) to receive any thing from the Lord.

I will give you three reasons why the life of faith is the only way to thrive.

First, because it puts a man upon the only way of blessings. As none can bless but God, and he can bless; so the blessings of God are to be expected only in the ways of God, and nothing so skilfull in Gods wayes as faith.

Secondly, it makes all the promises to yield: It is true, as God is infinitely above all, and his power is great; so faith (in a qualified sense) is above God himself; he is not able to stand against it: Be it to thee as thou wilt, said Christ to the believing woman: Thou shalt have the desires of thine heart, said David, Psal. 37:3, 4.

Thirdly, God himself and Christ, and all become ours, If we dare to trust and live by faith: Thou wantst outward supplies, I require no more of thee, saith God, but to walk uprightly and diligently, and to trust on me, and thou shalt have it: Thou wantest spiritual supplies for thy soul; I require no more of thee but to come to me, to trust to me, and go to my Ordinances; stand in my wayes and thou shalt have them.

Fourthly, it is the only stedfast and abiding life; when other lives are broken and crushed, they are gone down, yet this life by faith (like the Stars which shine in the night) remains firm. I will clear it by Argument; The stability of all sorts of lives is according to their

principles and motives. The life which depends upon a failing cause, it is a fading life: and the life which depends upon a constant cause, is a constant life.

Now the life of faith is bred by a living principle, and is fed by constant and abiding motives; you know that the grounds of this life of faith, are in God and Christ, and the promise; now all changes reach not to them, our changes are below in other things, but they are not in the promises, nor in God above: as changes are not in the heavens but in the air. Look upon things at hand, and so they appear with variety, and with much unlikeness but eye them in the Covenant, in the Promises, there you have the same faithful God still, tender father still alsufficient Saviour still, the Promises are Yea and Amen, Christ is the everlasting father: the Covenant of God, an everlasting Covenant: Gods love an immutable love: he is as able still, as willing still, his bow abides in strength, and underneath are his everlasting arms.

Though Davids Father and Mother forsake him, yet the Lord will take him up, and though all forsook Paul, yet God stood by him: so true is it that faith can cast a sure Anchor in all states and in all changes; it can look upon the same God, and the same Christ, and the same promises. Though the Mariners, when they put to sea, quickly lose sight of Land, yet they never loose sight of heaven; how far so ever they sail, and in what tempest soever, yet still they may look upon the heaven, the same heaven.

Faith never loseth sight of its rock, of its salvation, of its helps; that which it eyes, it may eye for ever, and that upon which it trusts, it may trust upon for ever; thou hast friends, and this springs up thy spirit; thy friends dye, and now thy spirits sink; thou hast parents, and children; in these thou rejoycest, and settlest thy confidence: both the one and the other embrace the dust, and thy heart is utterly broken for help and comfort. O Lord what have I more! E contra, thou hast a God, and he is the same for ever; a Christ, and he yesterday, today, and the same for ever: Promises, and they are a

word settled for ever in heaven; But when all sensibles fly off; yet if we live by faith we are at no degree of loss; what can he lack, who hath him who is all in all, and what can he lose, who hath him that knows no change at all?

Fourthly, let us consider Jesus Christ himself; There are diverse things which should perswade us to live by faith upon him.

There are nine things in him which may move us

1. The exceeding plentifulness of our supplies in him: Thou art not approaching to a dry Cistern, but to a full fountain; what may do thee good, he hath, and he hath that in a most eminent fulness

Is it the good and vertue of his redemption, which thou needest? Why; in him is plenteous redemption, and in him is strong salvation, and therefore his blood is called a precious blood, 1 Pet. 1:19. His blood had not been able to have discharged the least sin, unless it had exceeded the merit of the greatest; yea, it is as able to cross many debts, as any; sins may be distinguished into great, and little; into many, and few; but the blood of Christ, the vertue of that is singular and infinite in the price and value of it.

Is it the good and vertue of his holiness which thou needest? Why; John 1:16. There is a fulness of grace in him. 3:34. He hath the Spirit without measure. Therefore the holy vertues of Christ are stiled unsearchable riches, Eph. 3:8. You cannot comprehend the depth of them; when you can easily come to the bottom of a thing, then it is not unsearchable; but where you sound and fathom, and yet can feel no bottom; so here, &c. yea and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. 2:3. The Apostle hath said all that need to be said, Heb. 7:25. He is able to save them to the utmost which come unto God by him, (that is) if you need his intercession to implead acceptance of your persons, or of your requests; Why, there is none like him; come unto God by him, he is able to dispatch the greatest request.

Or is it sufficiency for duty which thou needest? Why; herein is Christ most able to supply thee. If the duty be active, he can enable thee to abundant fruitfulness, John 15:5. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If the duty be Passive, I can do all things through Christ which strengthneth me, said Paul, Phil. 4:13. Be it that thou of thy self art weak, yet Christ is strong, and he hath said My Grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness, 2 Cor. 12:9.

2. The ordination of Christ to this very thing, viz. to supply the state of a believer.

God did purpose him and intend him, and sent him, and he came for this very end to do us good, and to help us in time of need, Eph. 1:22. He gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, ver. 23. Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

The Head (you know) is a thing for office, and the offices of it is both dominion and influence; for these was Christ given to the Church to rule the Church, and to supply the Church. 1 Cor. 1:30. He is made unto us of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Heb. 7:22. He was made a surety of a better Testament, John 6:27. Him hath God the father sealed, Isa. 61:1. The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the person to them that are bound, &c. Christ, you will grant that he is an able Priest, and an able Prophet, and an able King, he is sufficient enough to pacifie by his blood, to purifie by his spirit, to conquer by his word, yea, but then consider yet further, that he is ordained of God to be this, and to do this for the believer. If the King commits a mighty stock to a mans hand and sets him in the place of a Treasurer, and confirms him by Seal, and all for this very end, that he should supply such and such persons, would they not come unto him for their supplies?

Thou art never able to be righteousness to thy self, thou art never able to give grace unto thy self, thou art never able to give strength to thy self; but Christ is, and God is, even that God to whom thou dost so earnestly cry, he hath ordained his own Son for thy help, even for thy help. As if the King should say to a poor man petitioning; Why, Go to my Treasurer, I have given him order for thee so the Lord to the Believer, Go to my Son, I have ordained him to give thee grace, I have ordained him to plead thy suits, to rule thy heart, to conquer thy sins and thy temptations, I sent him into the world for that very end and purpose, that he might be all in all unto thee: I purposed his blood for thee, and his righteousness, and his fulness, and his intercession, all for thee.

3. His services, what he hath done in the behalf of a believer.

Give me leave in this a little, and you shall see what reason we have then to trust upon Christ.

First, though he was equal with God, yet made he himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, Phil. 2:6, 7. he laid aside his glory as it were, and stooped down infinitely below himself into our nature to do service for us.

Secondly, he was made under the Law, (obedient thereto in fulfilling all righteousness) to redeem them that were under the Law, that they might receive the adoption of sons, Gal. 4:4, 6. he did in our stead, and as our surety, perfectly satisfie the whole Law in all its comands for us.

Thirdly, he did lay down his life for us, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, Phil. 2:8. he did shed his heart blood to mak our peace, and to reconcile us unto his Father: and have we not then reason to trust him, and to believe that he will do us good? Why: single out a person who professeth sincerity unto us, that he would lay out half his estate to

do us good, we would repose some confidence on him, but if we knew that he did so heartily affect us, that he would die for our good, O say we, you may trust on him, you need not fear to go to him, to request him for this or that courtesie. Now then, Christ hath not nakedly professed, but hath really acted this; he entred into bond, as it were, to satisfie for us; he did shed his very blood, and offered up his very life and soul for the believer, and yet wilt not thou, (for whom he hath done and endured all this) yet wilt thou not trust in him for merit, for righteousness, for grace, for strength, &c?

4. His disposition. Though a person were very able to do us good, yet if he hated us, we should (I confess) have small encouragement to build our hopes upon him; for two persons are not to be trusted; viz, the professed enemy, and the false friend. But far be the thought of these things in us, touching Jesus Christ; He is graciously and lovingly affected towards believers. Eph. 5:2. Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. Ephes. 3:19 To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Yea, Paul himself doth suggest unto us this love of Christ unto him, as the singular ground why he did by faith live upon him, Gal. 2:20. The life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Though I dare not trust an enemy, yet I dare to trust my friend; though I will not depend on him for help, yet on my friend I will: Why, a friend lives at all times, and love is the principle of bounty and of kindness: He that loves much will do much; beneficence and readiness to help, they grow in love as the branches in the root; and therefore Christ is ready to help, because exceeding in love to his members. Observe the Apostle to this very thing in another place. Heb. 4:16. Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

There is need in us of mercy, (for we sin daily) and need in us of grace, (for we are still weak) but in heaven there is a throne of grace,

there is mercy enough, and grace enough to help.

Object. I confess there is so, saith the believing person; but I am afraid to approach thereunto.

Sol. No, be not afraid, but come boldly unto the throne of grace, saith the Apostle. There is a twofold boldness: There is a boldness of ignorance; of this the Apostle speaks not: There is a boldness of holy affiance; of this he speak: Thus he comes boldly, who presents all his needs and requests in the Name of Jesus Christ, and confidently relies upon him for supply and acceptance.

Object. But, may the soul reply, what encouragement have I to raise this confident affiance?

Sol. See the Apostle, ver. 15. For we have not an high Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: As if he should say, I beseech you but to remember what your Christ is, and then you may boldly come; you are sensible; why; he is much more sensible of your infirmities; he knows your wants, yea, he feels them; feels them, how? there is a feeling by way of passion and change; so indeed he does not feel them; and there is a feeling by way of compassion: so he feels them (that is) he is tenderly sensible of them, he is very compassionately ready to help them: As a mother, she feels the want of bread, of heat, of cloaths, of liberty, in her child, she is infinitely ready to relieve him; such a kind of feeling is there in Christ to his members in their need; Ergo, come boldly to him, crave of him, trust and rely on him for help.

Why else is he called a merciful High Priest? What is mercifulness? If you look upon it in man, it is the a sounding of his bowels, it is a compassionate sympathy joynd with a singular readiness to relieve. And if you look upon it in God or Christ, it is a most tender sense of mans infirmities and necessities, accompanied with an exceeding propension or readiness to forgive the repenting soul, and to help and succer and comfort the Believer.

Obj. Thou art truly grieved and humbled for thy sins, and yet darest not to live by faith upon Christ, that he will get thee the pardon.

Sol. Why O man; Christ is a merciful high Priest; Here am I, saith Christ, I am very ready to offer up the vertue of my blood for thee.

So, thou art much distressed about the want of grace, and the insolency of sin and Satan; why, saith Christ, loe here I am, I am very willing, very ready to do thee good; to give thee more grace to conquer thy sins for thee, and Satan for thee: I am a merciful high Priest, my bowels are troubled for thee, I love thee earnestly, I remember thee still.

5. His conjunction and relation: I pray you consider of this. How stands it 'twixt Christ and a believer? what union is there? what relation? hath Christ no reference unto him? or hath he none unto Christ, that he is afraid to live upon him? To trust, to depend on him for his supplies.

Two things I will briefly touch.

1. The nearness of their relations.
2. The ground from them to live by faith.

First, there is a near relation 'twixt Christ and a believer: see Cant. 6:3. I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine. Why; this is a near relation indeed, a relation of mutual propriety, that Christ doth say of a Believer, Thou art mine, and the believer can reciprocally affirm of Christ, thou art mine; As Adam said of his wife, Gen. 2:23. Thou art bone of my bone, and flesh of flesh, that same doth the Apostle apply back from the Church to Christ, Eph. 5:30. we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. Of all rational relations, none so near, so dear, so tender as that of a man and his wife, yet in such a relation doth Christ and a believer stand.

Again; he is the head of his body the Church, Ephes. 1:22. the whole Church is his body; every Believer a member, Christ the Head. I spare the citation of more, as of the tree and the branches, the foundation and the building.

Secondly, Now this relation is the ground of affiance, a direct reason why we should live upon Christ by faith. For;

First, doth not special relation give special title: If a man becomes an husband, hath not the wife hereupon a title to the benefits and comforts of his estate? his riches are for her good; and his houses are for her good, and his land for her good; It holds just so here; faith espouseth a man to Christ, now Christ is mine, and I am his, and then the Apostle infers the title presently, 1 Cor. 3:21. All things are yours, Ver. 22 Whither Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours. Ver. 23. For ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods.

Secondly, hath not special relation a special obligation? Why, though a man be not bound but in a bond of charity to relieve and help a woman before he is married; yet when once he is married, then by vertue of that relation, there lies upon him the bond of plain and particular duty; he is bound to love his wife as himself, Eph. 5:28. and to nourish and cherish her, v. 29. Mark now how the Apostle states our matter, even here too; (Even as the Lord, the Church) as if Christ were the very pattern of this love, of this cherishing, and of this nourishing, of this supplying and helping.

Thirdly, hath not special relation a special affection? I will do much for my servant; I will do more for my child, but I will do most of all for my wife: Why? because she is neerer then all, she is my very self; Christ doth much for professed enemies; he leaves not himself without some testimonies of much kindness even to them; What; will he do much for strangers, much for enemies, and nothing for believers, for his own members, for his own spouse? Will he heal the ear of one who came to take away his life, and will he not (think you)

heal the heart of him who hath accepted of him unto life? would he pray for them that nailed his hands, and pierced his heart, (Father forgive them) & will he not do much more for thee, who grieveest for thy sins, prizest him in thy judgement, embracest him with all thy heart, wouldst serve him with all thy might? For thee, who art bone of his bone, will he not pray for thee? Father forgive him, Father supply him, Father comfort him; Father sanctifie him, Father strengthen and preserve him.

6. His invitation. This adds to all the rest: Behold he calls thee. Rev 3:18. Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou maist be rich, and white rayment, that thou maist be clothed; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou maist see, Rev. 22:17. Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely, Heb. 10:22. Draw neer in full assurance of faith.

But this I have touched heretofore, therefore I spare to insist, proposing only one thing; that the invitation of Christ is not only to faith, but to the life of faith; not only to acceptance, but to dependance also; not only to take his person but to trust, and rest upon his merit, and to serve our selves of his fulness. As if Christ should say unto a believer, I am thine, and all that I have is thine; now I pray thee in all thy necessities, come unto me, live upon my stock, draw from my fountain; when guilt is upon thee, make use of my blood; when wants are upon thee, make use of my treasure; when temptations are upon thee, make use of my power: when infirmities are upon thee, make use of my intercession, &c.

7. His assurances. What is that will you say? Why; this it is; he doth assure the believer, that if he will make use of him, he will not fail him, but will be effectual unto him.

See a place or two for this. Mark 11:24. What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Joh. 14:13. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name, that will I do, that your Father may be glorified in the same.

There be four things by which we may be perswaded that Christ will do us good, if that we will live upon him by faith.

First, his express promise, which you see in that place alledged. John 14:13. Whatsoever ye ask in my name, that I will do: Observe it well: he saith not, ask one particular only, but whatsoever ye ask in my Name, be it mercy, or be it justification, or be it holiness, &c. again, I will do it, as if he should say, ye shall not need to trouble your selves; and do not you fear, by reason of your unworthiness; I will take the matter upon my self; I will see it done: now brethren, when he that can help, saith I will help; when he that can do all things, promiseth us that he will do any thing for us, have we not cause to trust?

Secondly, his sealing of the promises: The promises (you know) do plentifully undertake all the latitude of the souls estate, and of the bodies too: There is mercy for transgressions, grace for sinfulness, comfort for tears, peace for trouble, strength for weakness, victory for assault, &c. All which promises Christ hath sealed and ratified by his blood, and therefore his blood is stiled the blood of the Covenant. See Heb. 9:15, 17; 13:20. The principal reason whereof is, to settle the hearts of believers, and to encourage their souls to live upon him for the performances of them, they being all in him Yea and Amen, 2 Cor. 1:20.

3. His actual impetration of all that good which now we do enjoy. Why O Christian, art thou afraid to live upon thy Saviour for more good? who was it that procured unto thee that same heavenly condition which now thou dost enjoy? hast thou any relation to God as thy God? Christ did procure it: Is any one sin subdued? Christ hath done it: Is any one sin got off and pardoned? Christ did procure it: Is there any melting in thy breast, any hatred of corruption, any desires of grace. any endeavour, any strength? Christ wrought them, Thou dost seek them, but Christ did work them.

Now this is to be learned, that what special thing Christ hath done, that is a pledge and an assurance that Christ is willing to do more:

Every gracious fruit and work points us to him the fountain and cause upon whom we are to trust, not only for the entrance, but also for the progress and compleatment of our spiritual estate.

4. His personal donation: He hath given himself unto thee: and will he not do other things for thee? which is greater?

5. His offices: All of them call upon us to live upon Christ by faith. To what end was he Priest? was it to satisfie for himself? He needed not to satisfie for his own sins who was without all sin: Nor doth he make his own peace, whom the father did, and doth ever love: Verily his satisfactions were for transgressors; and if there be any scope and intention of the vertues of that satisfaction, assuredly they look directly upon penitential believers: so likewise his intercession (which is another part of that office;) why? is it, think you, for himself? nay, in that he is a Mediator, and a Mediator is an Agent 'twixt two persons; he hath no wants to be supplied, he needs not to ingratiate himself; assuredly brethren, he ever lives to make intercession for us, for us, saith the Scripture, and He ever lives to do that work; He is continually offering and presenting the efficacy of his merit, which, as a sweet incense perfumes our continual Sacrifices, so making them acceptable, &c.

The like may be said of his Prophetical and Kingly offices: he was invested with them as our Mediator, and therefore for our good.

Now say, what a blasphemous absurdity were it to conceive of Jesus Christ as of an Idol, which hath eyes but sees not; which hath ears, but hears not; which hath hands but handles not: which hath feet, but walks not. That he should be a Priest to offer for sin, and yet we will not trust upon him for the pardon of the least; that he should live to make intercession, and yet we will not deliver any one request into his hands, or relie on him to obtain us any one good thing which we need or crave; That he is a King, able to subdue all his enemies; a Prophet, and able to teach any mans heart; but we will not credit our souls upon him; we will not repose the victories of our corruptions

upon his mighty arm, nor the reforming and beautifying of our spirits upon his singular wisdom and holiness. Why? what didst thou think or mean, when thou didst accept of him to be thy Mediator? didst thou conjecture that if once thou gavest thy consent to take him, that never after thou shouldst need him? or if so, wouldst never make use of him? Well, no more; what the Apostle said in another case, that I say in this, if we will not live by faith upon Christ, we do what in us lies make void the Redemption of Christ, the intercession of Christ, the holiness of Christ, the glory and power of all the Offices of Christ.

9. If all this will not move us to live by faith in Christ, (that is) to trust upon him for the help and supply of our spiritual estate; then take one thing more; there is an impossibility of supplies for thy soul any other way; go and think and act any other course to do thy soul good, besides this, and it shall be fruitless, after many years industry; as thou art, so still shalt thou be.

Obj. Thou wilt say, I will never leave complaining of this nature till it be bettered.

Sol. Thy nature is not bettered by complaint, but by grace: and that is in Christ, and never had, till we can trust.

Object. Thou wilt say, I will never leave grieving, nor praying, nor hearing, nor reading, nor fasting, nor conferring, till, &c.

Sol. 'Tis true, these are means, but where is the cause? What if a man should say, I will stay here all my life at these conduit pipes, but I will have water, whiles in the mean time the fountain yields not forth? I confess the Christian must apply himself to the Ordinances, but then it is Christ who sends forth the help, and then do the Ordinances deliver us our helps from Christ, not presently when one hears, but when effectually they have enabled us to believe. If thou canst hear and believe, pray and believe, mourn and believe, fast and believe, &c. Then good shall come unto thy soul.

Draw a thousand bonds, yet if they be none of them sealed, nothing is yet legally and forcibly made over and conveyed many prayers avail little or nothing till they are sealed with faith, and now God will acknowledge our demands as authentick, and Christ will deliver unto us our hearts desire.

I had thought to have handled the opposites of the life of faith, with the evidence of a true living by faith, and also the means which might assist us to the life of faith: But I recal my self, I may not expatiate so far; sufficient hath been touched for this Use; perhaps the subject may be more amply treatised, if ever I should come to set down before that the am directly and intentionally: I therefore proceed to another Use.

CHAP. XVIII

The improvement of faith to a full assurance

I Will yet advance on to one Use more; Since faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved; therefore not only to labour for that faith: but to exalt that faith: my meaning is to improve this faith also yet further to strength and comfort.

Divines observe a double act of faith.

One of adherence, by which it cleaves unto Christ, and relies upon him alone for righteousness, pardon of sin, grace and salvation.

Another is of evidence, by which it clears unto the soul its interest in Christ, and his righteousness and merits.

In the former, the soul renounceth all other corner stones, all other rocks of salvation, and trusts only upon the Name of Jesus Christ, accepts of him as the only Lord, and relies on him as the only Saviour, casting or rolling its heavenly and eternal safetie into his blessed arms.

In the latter, the soul feels it self reciprocally embraced by Christ; I have accepted of him to be my Lord, and he faith, I am thy King.

I have relyed on him to be my Saviour, and he faith, I am thy salvation; For pardon of sins, and he faith unto me, Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Now to this patt of faith do I desire to mount the soul of a true believer, viz. not only to apprehend Christ, but to know himself to be apprehended by him: not only to believe, but to know him whom he

hath believed. To rise thus far by faith to an assurance, that Christ is my Christ; my Redeemer liveth, who gave himself for me; My Lord, and my God, that he is my righteousness, my redemption, my propitiation.

For the better settling and exciting of you in this particular, I will briefly touch at these things.

1. What the assurance of faith is.
2. It may be had.
3. It should be had.
4. The Arguments to stir us up to labour for it (that is) to know our riches, and know our possessions.
5. The means to get it.

SECT. I

Quest. 1. What the assurance of faith is.

Sol. It is a victorious conclusion against the strength of doubts, whereby the mind of a believing person is ascertained and perswaded, and upon good ground settled, cornering his personal interest in Christ and his benefits.

For the better opening of this description, be pleased to observe these subsequent propositions.

1. That the assurance of faith, it is the conclusion of an Evangelical Syllogism: The Syllogism is this, Whosoever repents and believes in Christ, Christ with his benefits are his, and he is Christs; but I do truly repent and believe in Christ; therefore Christ and his benefits are mine, and I am his.

In this Syllogism there are three propositions.

The first is a Proposition of most infallible certainty, it being expressly the voice of Jesus Christ himself, and of it the mind hath no doubt, but fully assents unto it as a principle of Divine truth, viz. That he who repents and believes in Christ, is his, and he is Christs. And of this the mind of a believer may be abundantly perswaded without questionings, and doubts, forasmuch as it is a part of the Word of God, to whose absolute truth it doth plentifully subscribe.

The second is a proposition carrying with the direct act of faith, in which the believing soul doth accept of Christ, or receive him, and trust upon him, by vertue of which there ariseth a most real and true union 'twixt Christ and the believer.

The third and the last, which is the conclusion or inference drawn from both the former, comprehends in it the formal assurance of a believing heart, that therefore Christ is mine and I am his.

That he who believes in Christ, hath Christ, and shall be saved; this is not yet that subjective assurance of lustifying faith, forasmuch as many an hypocrite may believe that truth, and yet have no personal interest in Christ.

Again, that I do believe in Christ, neither is this essentially assurance, forasmuch as to believe is one thing, and to be assured is another thing; many a good heart may accept of Christ upon all his terms and articles of peace and life, and may cast and repose itself on him as the only rock and hope of the soul, and yet it may be so far from assurance (even at that time when it doth so earnestly cleave unto Christ) that instead of assurance, it may be both tossed and prevailed upon by doubtings, suspitions, and fears, concerning its particular and personal propriety in Christ and in his merits.

But the last of the propositions, I am Christs, and Christ is mine, this is formal assurance: for this concludes the dispute of the heart, and hath in it particular and personal evidence.

2. It is a victorious conclusion against the strength of doubting: you know that in the mind of man, there are three kinds of working about an object comprehending goodness and truth.

One they call peremptory assenting, and peremptory dissentings in which the mind doth yield plainly, or else refuseth to subscribe and grant the matter proposed to be true and good.

Another they call doubtings, which are the wavering acts of the mind, wherein it doth not absolutely grant or deny; it doth not absolutely conclude that so it is; nor absolutely that so it is not; yet rather enclines (for want of further evidence in the soul) that it is not so, then that it is so.

The third they call evidence or assurance, which is such a work of the mind, wherein, against all doubtings and suspicions, the mind sees clearly the thing to be so, or not to be so: And thus is it here in the assurance of faith; such a light the mind hath that it is able to rise beyond, and against doubtings, and to convince the soul against all suspicions, that Christ indeed is mine, and I am his.

Where, by the way observe thus much; that assurance doth presuppose some doubtings: for if the mind of a believer had not doubtings about its personal interest, it could not well be said to be now assured. Doubtings did verily, and do, and may work in a believing soul; yea, but am I sure that Christ is mine? is it certain that my sins are pardoned: I trust they are, but I fear they are not.

Now assurance comes and conquers these workings, and clears all the doubting arguments, and convinceth the mind, that of a truth Christ is mine, and my sins are pardoned.

There are two degrees of doubtings.

One consists in the questioning of our believing proprieties, Is Christ mine, is his righteousness mine? &c.

Another exceeds this, and consists in dominion, when the soul is suppressed by the strength of these doubtings, to side with it, and still to hang in suspense.

Now this latter degree (especially) is assurance opposite unto; namely, it conquers our doubting, answers our arguments, clears it unto the soul against the many suspicions which did arise, that Christ doth indeed own it, that he is the Saviour thereof, and therefore I call it a victorious conclusion.

3. Assurance of faith, it is an ascertaining or perswading act, and that is proper and inseparable from assurance; therefore is it so expressed in Rom. 8:38. I am perswaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come ver. 39. Nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Yea, and it is expressed by a word of personal certainty, 2 Tim. 1:12. I know whom I have believed: In knowledge there is always a certainty; for that is one of the main differences 'twixt it and opinion, that the one leaves the mind uncertain and wavering, and the other determinates the mind with certainty and infallibility.

Whiles the mind remains like a pair of indifferent scales which bend this way and that way; or like a boat in the river, now floating up, and then sinking down; now reeling to this side, by and by to that side; it cannot be said to be assured; perhaps Christ is mine, perhaps I am his; this is a plain uncertainty, for the mind is not perswaded. But in the assurance of faith, the mind is like a scale that weighs down, it is perswaded, and ascertained, there is a prevalent evidence of the thing. Not only in absolute terms, that Christ belongs to a believer, but in reflexive terms, that Christ belongs to me, he gave himself for me, and he is my redeemer, and this particular or personal perswasion is assurance.

4. Assurance is not all kinds of perswasion or ascertaining: there are two kinds of assurance or perswasion of the mind touching a mans

personall interest in Christ.

One is Imaginary and deluding: for as the heart of a man may deceive it self about the habit of faith (or any other grace) so it may delude him about the acts and degrees of the same: doth the true believer believe in Christ? so thinks the hypocrite, that he doth too: Hath the true believer a perswasion of his personal propriety in Christ, which clears the mind of doubting? so hath the Hypocrite too, a most exalted confidence, an Iron faith that would never bend, nor bow by doubtings. It may be with him as with a poor man in a dream: what the rich man hath by propriety, and in possession, even that same thing may the poorest man have in a dreaming fancy and imagination.

But then ask the Hypocrite by what grounds art thou thus confidently perswaded? what did incline thy mind hereto? what promise hast thou found that Christ is, and will be thine, whose heart was never humbled for sin, whose heart still retains the love of sin? Now, as the man who being demanded how he came without his wedding garment, he is speechless.

The fool (saith Solomon, Prov. 14:16.) rageth and is confident: and so the presumptuous person, He sinneth, and yet is perswaded; he walketh in his sins, and yet is assured.

I pray you remember that the assurance of faith is no such absolute and boystrous setling of the mind, that Christ is mine however, though I be never so ignorant and wicked, and though I live never so wretchedly and profanely; yet Christ is mine, and God is my mercifull Father, and my sins are pardoned: O no, this is a Diabolical assurance, it is no Evangelical assurance.

Another is grounded, and divinely rational, and it alwayes follows sound repentance and faith: That assurance which goes before these, is false; absolutely I am bound to repent and to believe, but I cannot be assured, but in a conditional order: If I should be assured that

Christ were mine before, before I did believe: this were a lye: forasmuch as Christ is not mine, untill I do by faith accept of him; and if I should be assured that my sins were pardoned before I did repent, I did in this delude mine own heart, forasmuch as sin is not pardoned, unless it be repented of. No, but I must repent of my sins, I must accept of Jesus Christ offered unto me in the Gospel, to be my Lord and Saviour, and now I labour to be assured, now I come to be perswaded, having subscribed to all the proportions and articles of the Gospel, that now Christ is mine, and I do by the Word convince my soul that so it must be. For thus I argue with my soul, Whosoever repents, and believes, and endeavours to walk in Christ, assuredly Christ is his, and he is Christs; but I do this; Ergo, Christ is mine.

I cannot make so short a cut as the presumptuous person doth. Christ died for sinners, therefore for me; God is merciful, therefore my sins are pardoned without any more ado. O no, there is an orderly progress in true assurance. It doth not (*saltum facere*) stride over to extreams; As if a man should see a Lease drawn, and presently concludes the houses are mine, the lands are mine; No, but he must hear, and understand, and weigh things, and subscribe, and seal to the conditions, and then he may safely and boldly say that they are his. So must the soul hearken to the tenor of the Gospel, understand both the precious offer, and the peculiar conditions of Christ; then he must consent unto them and accept of Christ to be Lord and Saviour, and resolve to forsake every sin, and to yield up his heart and life to the obedience of Christ, and earnestly seek the Lord by his Spirit, to perswade him of his particular interest in Christ, and lock up stedfastly, and wait upon the Lord in the use of the Ordinances, and other consecrated means; Thus is the assurance of faith wrought in the soul, and upon these grounds doth it settle the mind.

5. Lastly, Assurance of faith (concerning which we speak) directs man, even to a personal evidence of his particular interests in Christ and his benefits.

There is you know a double evidence.

One is real, and respects the thing, or object to be believed;

Another is personal, and respects the state of him who doth believe.

Now assurance of faith, consists in the determining of the mind, about the particular goodness of that thing, which it assents unto in the general as most true, viz. That Jesus Christ is my Lord, and my God, that he is salvation for me; it opens the eyes as it were to see, what Christ is to me, and what he hath done for me, and what he will do to me.

And thus briefly have you had a short explication of the nature of this assurance: a most heavenly thing it is; and only believers have it, though all reach not yet unto it; I now proceed to another enquiry.

SECT. II

Quest. 2. Whether such an assurance of faith may be had?

Sol. The Papists will not hear of it by any means, (some of them) unless in an extraordinary way: They conceive that faith is notable to raise the mind beyond a moral hope, and conjecture, and many lewd and lazy Protestants shake hands with them in that opinion. But I will clear it unto you, that every believer may come to this assurance: It is a possible thing: I dare not say that every believer de facto is assured, yet he may be assured of his particular interest, and this I will evidence easily.

1. The believing soul is not incapable of perswasion: They say that faith doth not destroy, but elevate the understanding; and that same is a truth; for it doth new temper the understanding and the will, but not overthrow their substantial natures and abilities. Now this is undeniable, that the power of reflection is natural to the understanding: It is such a faculty which is able to look upon its own actings, and its own state; yea, and perswasion by way of certainty,

the understanding is capable of it; forasmuch as it is by knowledge, and sense, and experience made most assuredly certain, about many objects and conclusions.

Now because faith doth not destroy, but elevate the mind, it may by faith come to a perswasion and reflection.

2. Again, to urge things (as yet) in a rational way; Faith can see as strong reason and argument to perswade and settle the mind, and assure it, as the Philosopher can to raise the mind to a certainty of his conclusions: The minds perswasion depending naturally upon strong evidence and the power of argument;

Now faith can bring as strong arguments to convince and perswade the mind: for its arguments depend upon two strong testimonies, One of the infallible Word of God, the other on the voice of a renewed conscience; Ergo,

3. God would not promise that to a believer in this life, which is impossible for the believer to rise unto: Forasmuch as promises are of thing as future, they are the undertaking of good things, which shall come to pass and be performed, now every future thing is a possible thing: that which shall be, we may confidently affirm of it that it may be; But this personal evidence or assurance, it is a thing which God hath promised: Ezek. 34:30. They shall know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel are my people, Hos. 2:19. I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will, &c. Verse 23. I will say unto them, Thou art my people: and they shall say, Thou art our God.

4. I spare to add the strength of the divine Spirit in its reflections on the soul, as also that perswasive vertue in a renewed conscience; and the many experiences in many Christians who have attained unto this assurance; all which do clearly evidence that it is a thing possible: That which the Spirit is able to force in a believing soul:

that which many a believing soul hath attained unto; that same is a possible thing: But, &c. Ergo.

SECT. III

Quest. 3. Whither every Believer should strive to the assurance of faith?

Sol. I will premise only a thing or two.

One is, that some duties concern all men at all times, and immediately, as to repent and to believe.

Other duties concern some men, and those in an order and mediately: As to be assured of a mans particular interest in Christ, it is not an immediate duty, it doth not concern a man meerly as an absolute sinner: for a man who is unconverted, and yet unbelieving, is not bound to be perswaded that he is Christs, and Christ is his, unless we will say that he is bound to be perswaded of a lye; no, but he must first be a believer, he must accept of Jesus Christ upon his own terms, and being a believer, I say, he is bound to labour for particular assurance: Not to let the real interest of Christ in him, and of his soul in Christ, to hang hovering and in dispute, but to determine them by particular and personal evidence.

Again, premise this; It is one thing to speak de facto what every believer hath; and it is another thing to speak de jure, what every believer should have: It is true, that every one who hath Christ, cannot be yet assured, and say, that Christ is mine: but then, as Christ is really his (as certainly he is thine, as thy husband is thy husband) so the Christian is obliged to assure his heart thereof.

Which I shall easily clear by Argument.

1. We are bound to draw neer unto God in the full assurance of faith, Heb. 10:22. Which is, as I conceive, in a clear perswasion that we shall not fail, but enjoy the good which he promiseth; now this

cannot be, unless a man be assured and perswaded that God is his God, and Christ is his Christ; forasmuch as perswasion of audience doth alwayes arise from a presupposed perswasion of personal and mutual interest; I cannot by faith be perswaded that God will give such a good thing, or such, unless I am first perswaded that he is my God, that God is my God, or Christ is my Christ; It is a fundamental perswasion, upon which all others are built; for this gives life and settlement to my doubting soul; I many times doubt, but shall I have this thing which I ask? yes, sayes the believing heart. But how are you assured of it? I reply, because God is my God, he hath given himself unto me, Ergo he will give this: but how know you that God is your God? Upon good ground; why, saith the believing soul, of that I am abundantly perswaded, I doubt it not: hereupon the soul raiseth it self to that other assurance, of acceptance and audience; why then I will not doubt of this, I will be confident that then the Lord will hear, for he is my God; and David goes this way very often.

2. We are bound (all our dayes) to give God thanks for his greatest mercies; now I think that the bestowing of Christ upon the soul is as great a mercy as ever poor sinners had.

Obj. It is so, but what of this?

Sol. But we cannot give God hearty thanks whiles we are doubtful of our particular interest in Christ; Canst thou go unto the Lord and say? O Lord, I bless thee from my soul for all the mercies which thou hast conferred on me; health I have and I know it, for which I do thank thee; riches I have, and friends, and this I know too, and for them I thank thee too; I thank thee also exceedingly from the bottom of my soul, for that thou hast given thy own Son to me, Jesus Christ; but truly, I know not whether thou hast given him to me, or no: I thank thee exceedingly for the pardon of my vile sins in his blood, but verily I am not sure of this, I rather think they are not pardoned. Nay, this will not run smooth, and the reason is, because so much particular evidence as God gives a man of his personal interest in

himself or Christ, or his merits, so much (and no greater) thankfulness will the soul be brought unto.

SECT. IV

Quest. 4. What Arguments to move believers to labour for the assurance of faith?

Sol. There are many.

1. As he said to Job, Do the consolations of God seem small unto thee? That I say here, doth assurance seem a small thing unto thee?

Consider (seriously) the matters and things about which this assurance is conversant, and thou shalt find them of the greatest consequence in the world.

What dost thou think of Jesus Christ for a sinner? Can there be a more excellent good then Christ? I count all things but dross and dung for the excellency of Christ, said Paul, Phil. 3. or can there be a more necessary good for thee then Christ? Tell me in sad thoughts, that if thou hadst all the pleasures of the world, and all the honours of the world, and all the riches of the world and yet wast Christless, that is, thou hadst no portion in Christ; why, what avails all this, as long as thou art Christless? as Abraham said, seeing I am childless: In whom is God reconciled unto thee but in Christ? and how wilt thou stand before God, if thou have not Christ? by whom canst thou get salvation, but by Christ? and why then wilt not thou force thy soul to give all diligence to make thy part in Christ sure to thy soul, that thou maist come in all cases to that of Job, I know that my Redeemer liveth: and with Paul, He loved me and gave himself for me.

Again, what dost thou think of the pardon of sins? verily the time was once, even then when thy spirit did roar all the night, and thou foundest no quiet in the day: when thy moisture was turned into the drought of Summer, and thy soul was disquieted within thee; I say in

that time thou couldst with many tears break out, and say, with David, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered: Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. O what wouldst thou have given to have believed, that thy sins should be pardoned? thou couldst then discover death in so unpardoned a state and life, then in a discharged and absolved condition. Why I pray you, is pardon of sin so pretious a thing? and is the assured knowledge thereof a small thing? Is it not enough to have the pardon pass, not only the seal of the King, but the eye also of the malefactor?

Yea, yet further, what think you of eternal life? what is it? O, I cannot reach it by thoughts, much less by words; Life! no such thing on the earth as it; eternal life, what thing in heaven more then it? To see my God, my Christ, to be gloriously united to them, to be filled with the perfections of holiness, brightness of glory, to know him as we are known, to love him in the transcendency of love; I know not what I say; for I speak of eternal life: O! if the glimpse of divine favour here be the admiration of our souls, the perfection of our joyes, the heaven on earth! tell me, what is the fulness of his favour? What is the full evidence of his favour? What is the everlasting evidence of his favour? Now, eternal life is all this, all this; alas I have said nothing of it yet; Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man what God hath, &c.

And is not this a matter to be determined and ascertained to our souls? what, to let eternal life hang in suspense! verily, though until we do mount and rise to the assurance of faith, we leave (for our part, though the thing may be sure in it self) even this also our eternal life as a thing doubtful. Thou wilt not hold the least quillet of thy land, upon unevident and unsure terms: yet wilt thou, &c.

2. Assurance will marvellously settle and quiet the soul. David expresseth so much, Psal. 4:6. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Ver. 7. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more then in the time that their corn and wine increased. Ver. 8. I

will lay me down and sleep. The Ship at anchor is safe, but in a calm it is quiet: faith makes our state sure, and assurance peacefull.

Two effects he there delivers of this blessed assurance; one is a transcendent joy, and another is a compleat peace: It glads the heart, and it pacifies the heart: It is most true, that faith in its vital act (of acceptation) intitles us to both. Every believer hath cause of great joy and sweet peace; but it is faith in this eminent act (of assurance) which replenisheth the soul with actual joy, and actual comfort: For now the believer sees and knows his happiness: He hath a Christ and knows it; he hath pardon of sin, and knows it; he stands in favour of God, and knows it: that which held up his soul, is now opened; all the causes of his comfort shine, as it were, and clearly discover themselves in a way of well grounded propriety. As David said concerning his enemies, Psal. 27:1. The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? So the assured soul in this case can exult, God is my God, Christ is my Christ, they have pardoned my sins, accepted of my person, what should trouble me? what should disquiet me? my soul doth now rejoyce in God my Saviour. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, Romans 8:34. Sin, that is pardoned; Justice, that is satisfied: my soul, that is reconciled: my person, that is justified; my prayers, they are answered; my heart, that is pacified: for God is mine, and Christ is mine, and I am his. Before I am assured, I see my sins, look up to Christ, and adventure my soul on him for pardon, I trust on him, yet I may fear; but when I am assured, I see my sins, look up to Christ, and my soul is quiet and rejoyceth. As it was with the Israelites, when they were Neer the Red-sea, they looked back on their enemies, and looked up to God, but yet they were exceedingly afraid: Afterwards, when they had past through the Red-sea, and stood upon the shore, they looked back upon the same enemies, but now as drowned, and then their sighs were turned into joyes, and their fears into peace: They exceedingly rejoyced. Why, in assurance, though we look upon the same sins, yet not in the same manner: Now we look upon them as drowned

enemies, as iniquities cast into depths of the Sea, as pardoned iniquities: Now, though sin doth grieve the soul, yet sin pardoned doth quiet and rejoyce the soul.

3. Assurance doth arm the heart against future temptations.

There are two sorts of temptations against both which the assurance of faith doth arm the believer.

1. To sin: Though assurance be a kind of heaven upon earth, yet in this doth the beatifical vision differ from a believing assurance, that the one leaves no sin at all, but the other is a day of great comfort to a believing sinner; yet even an assured person hath yet much of a sinning nature remaining in him.

Nevertheless, though assurance doth not wholly cast off fear, yet it doth exceedingly keep off sin: A believing person shall not easily sin while he is reading his pardon, and looking his Christ in the face. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? If the meer respect of a God was so prevalent with Joseph; O how much more powerful is the propriety in a God? How can I do this great wickedness and sin against my God? Should such a man as I flee! said Nehemiah: so the assured Christian, should such a man as I sin!

Nay, remember it: Sin is never more odious to the heart, then when the heart is most assured: The great and rich mercy of God in Christ, it is the principal bane of a temptation. The man who formerly would have stept out against the threats of justice, having now obtained mercy, trembles at the very thoughts of sinning.

2. To despair; it is possible for an assured person to sin, and then this is probable, (and more then so) that new sinnings will quickly cloud old assurance: Though a believer loseth not his life, yet he may lose his health; and though he hath a Father still, yet by sinning he loseth the sight of that Father; and is hereupon exceedingly humbled and repents, and yet perhaps cannot read his former Evidences; he fears that he is cast off for ever, and shall be remembred no more. But yet

an ancient assurance well grounded may assist the soul, and preserve the soul against despairing throwes, That God will not cast off the soul, Jer. 31:3. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee. Ver. 4. Again, I will build thee, and thou shalt be built. So Psal. 89:30. If his Children forsake my Law and walk not in my Judgements. Ver.31. If they break my Satutes and keep not my Commandments. Ver. 32. Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes. Ver. 33. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. Ver. 34. My Covenant will I not break, &c. Sure mercies of David, Isaiah 55:3. So for Christ, John 13:1. Having loved his own, he loved them to the end.

4. Assurance by faith sweetens all other blessings to us: Job speaking of many outward mercies, in his children, in his plenty, his honours, Job 29:5, 6, 7. and ver. 3. he recounts one which shadowed all of them, (his candle shined upon my head.) As if the evidence of Gods favour were like the light which gives life and beauty to all the colours in the room, and without which all our blessings lay dead and dark. O what an enlivening matter is this to all that I enjoy! and God is my God too, and Christ is my Christ too, and my sins are pardoned too: here is a dear and loving husband; yea, and God is my God too; here are tender and observing children; yea, and Christ is my Christ too; here is plenty of food, and raiment, and friends, yea, and my sins are pardoned too. But the want of this may check all our blessings, and is able to marr the very comfort of our comforts; I am exceeding rich, yea, but I cannot yet say that God is my God; I am greatly honoured by man; yea, but I cannot yet say that Christ is my Redeemer; I have health and marrow in my bones, and want not for any outward mercy; yea, but I cannot yet say that my sins are pardoned: for ought I know that may yet stand upon record, which may lose my soul for ever.

5. Nay, again, it is able to sweeten all our crosses: a cross is more or less heavy, (to the Christian) by how much the more or the less God

appears to the soul: The Disciples may even in a storm rejoyce, if Christ be in the Ship.

It was an excellent speech, that of Job 29:3. By his light I walked through darkness: and David answers him in Psal. 23:4. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me; How triumphant is Paul, and beyond both himself and all crosses, and all because of his assurance, and perswasion? Rom. 8:35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Ver. 37. Nay in all these things we are more then conquerors through him that loved us. Ver. 38. For I am perswaded that neither Life, nor Death, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Ver. 39. Nor Heeght, nor Depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Can more be said? need we to add? See him again in Romans 5:2. We rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God.

Objection. Who would not, may some reply, in so great a good?

Sol. 3. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also: and who can do this but he who hath some measure of assurance?

Indeed faith can make the soul to submit in a cross, but it is assurance which makes the soul to rejoyce and to triumph.

What the Apostle spake of death, that is true of all afflictions, the sting of them is sin: where the conscience is wounded, and the sight of heaven is darkned, there the cross is heavy and bitter; A man hath a burden on his shoulders, and a burden on his conscience, and yet a burden that he cannot see any to smile on him, and comfort him;

But now when the spirit of a man is sound, and the evidence of faith is clear, when a man feels all to be right within, all to be peace abroad, that all stands fair 'twixt him and his God: Nay, and he can see God as his God; the strength of this assurance, doth not only

allay a burden, but raiseth the heart exceedingly above it: yet God is good to Israel; and though I see the Olive to fail, and the Fields not to yield, and the flocks to be cut off, yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. The Lord God is my strength, Hab. 2:17, 18.

Sixthly, it makes all kinds of duty to flow and to rise. I will instance briefly in some.

1. In the Active.

2. In the Passive.

1. Active.

1. Praise and thankfulness, Psal. 103:1. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name. Ver. 2. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Verse 3, Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: Nay, he is at it again, Psal. 116:12. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me! I will take up the cup of salvation, &c? O the evidence and apprehension of so great a mercy and salvation! it fills every vain of the heart, &c. Musick is highest and sweetest in the fairest weather. He who disputes his mercy can hardly bless for it.

Now I see much forgiven, and therefore I bless much: What! and all this forgiven to me, and so freely, and so fully also, so many transgressions, yet to cover all, yet to be reconciled, yet to put down the gracious pardon before mine eyes.

2. Prayers: There are two properties in these, which will surely arise out of assurance.

One is confidence and boldness; A man will come boldly to the throne of grace who is once assured by faith: Now that of John comes in indeed, 1 John 5:14. This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us: Christ (I

remember) teacheth his Disciples, (and in them all Believers) to pray for many excellent things, both for soul and for body, but then he preferred, he sets this in the front, Our Father, as if he had clearly suggested this unto us, that the assurance of God as our Father, is that which gives unto the heart a strong confidence in all petitions: Why, who will not come freely and confidently to a Father, to his Father, to his reconciled Father?

Another is quickness and life in the affections, Psal. 63:1.

O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee. Observe it, I will seek thee, there is now diligence; early will I seek thee, there is quickness of affection: and why, I will seek thee early? because O God, thou art my God.

3. Ordinances: Now a man will flee to them, as the Doves to the windows (it is the Prophet Isaiah's expression;) A man hath an heart to bow the knee when he knows that my God will help him: A man hath an heart to hear the Word, when he knows my God will teach him to profit, and will speak peace unto him: A man will with cheerfulness address himself to the Sacrament, when he knows this is the blood which was shed for the remission of his sins, and his salvation is there sealed. The Apostle hath an apt passage in 1 Pet. 2:2. As new born babes desire the sincere the milk of the Word, and surely that is with much delight and with much earnestness, (for so do babes desire the milk of the breasts) But what might stir up this? Ver. 3. If so be that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious; a taste of God, of God as gracious, yea, this is it which whets the appetite, this sets on the heart to the Ordinances indeed.

4. All obedience, actuating the whole kinds of duty.

Why, assurance in the soul makes all duty both cheerful' and stedfast, Psalm 26:3. Thy loving kindness is before mine eyes (therefore) have I walked in thy truth.

Why is duty to good hearts sometimes so weary some, so slack, so troublesome? verily, faith is weak, doubts are strong, fears are many; could they once see God to be their God, Christ to be their Lord and Saviour, sins pardoned in his blood, and all this to them: Now even the lame would walk, and the weary would run, the heart would set upon obedience with all its strength, and all its care.

2. The like may be said for passive obedience: assurance enables it exceedingly: The love of Christ constraineth us, said Paul, 2 Corinth. 5. I remember the Apostle hath a notable passage, Romans 5:7. For a good man some will even dare to die: That is, for a bountiful man: a man of eminent and singular good to preserve him, for his sake, a private man would lay down his life: If the goodness and kindness of a man hath sometimes such a force with us, what influence then hath the goodness of a God upon a believing heart! The kindness, the blood of a Christ upon a believing and an assured heart? Who would not suffer reproach for Christ, who suffered death for him? who would not kiss the stake to bring him honour, who shed his blood to get his pardon, and to crown him with eternal glory? Believe it, assurance will make thy life more fruitful, and thy heart more suffering. Faith will make holy duties to be no burden, and assurance will make it a delight: Faith will make a man to bear the Cross, and assurance will make a man to triumph under it: We are more then Conquerors, said perswaded Paul.

Seventhly, Assurance of faith, it is a bathing spring to all our graeces: Shall I instance in some?

1. The mourning heart doth much depend upon the assured mind: No man ever did, or ever shall take God by the hand, as reconciled to him, or look on Christ as redeeming him, or read his pardon with assurance, but his heart shall be full of joy, and his eyes full of tears. The shall look on him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn as a man mourns for his only child, Zach. 12:10. There is nothing softens the heart so well as faith, and which melts it so much as assurance.

The powers of the greatest kindness, and most gracious love, do open the fountain of godly sorrow within the soul.

2. Love kindles in the heart upon assurance. To whom much is forgiven, the same will love much, said Christ, Luke 7:47. We love him because he loved us first, said John. The love of God to us is the cause of our love to him again, and again, and the more that love is cleared to us, the more is our love rekindled to him; goodness is a cause of love, here it is; bountifulness is a cause of love, here it is; knowledge of both a special provocation of love; in assurance here it is.

What a thing is this! that God should give his Covenant to me, his Son to me, his Mercies to me, his loving kindness to me, his glory in heaven unto me! I love a man who defends my Name, I love a man who gives me a book, I love a man who gives me my ransom, I love a man who gives me a meals meat; Ah! poor things in comparison: how do I then infinitely exceed in love to my God, who I know hath pardoned, hath justified, hath accepted, will save me for ever?

More might be said of all particular graces whatsoever.

8. Assurance by faith doth but ease us of the world, and mounts the soul above it.

1. It easeth us of the world: How can he walk with cares, who is indeed perswaded that God is his Father! he that gave him Christ, will give him all other things freely: God will not stand for a little earth, who hath bountifully given a whole heaven; and he will surely find me food and rayment for my body, who found mercy and the blood of his own Son for my soul.

2. Nay it mounts us above the world; they do observe that these lower things grow little and less, by how much the higher a man is seated: If a may could be elevated to one of the celestial orbes, the whole world would seem but a narrow spot of ground unto him. In

one point this is most true, the nearer God draws unto the soul, the more nothing doth this world appear.

O the blessed favour of God! the evidences of our union with Christ! This is like the light of the Sun, which puts out the light of ten thousand candles: Thou wouldst never complain of too little in the world, if thou hadst so much as made up a true assurance of heaven.

9. Lastly, Assurance will breed comfort in life, and confidence in death.

Object. Why! are Gods people afraid many times to die? they cannot say with Christ, I will go to my Father.

They have the bond, but see not the seal: They are not assured of Reconciliation, of pardon, of salvation.

But if they could with Simeon, Take Christ into their arms: if once they could be assured, Now lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

He who by assurance looks Christ in the face, may with cheerful confidence look death in the face: I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, said Paul, Phil. 1:23. How so verse 21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain: But how knows he that? 2 Tim. 1:12. For I know whom I have believed, and I am perswaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. So 2 Cor. 5:1. For we know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

SECT. V

Quest. 1. Now I come to the last inquiry, by what means the soul may get up to this assurance?

Sol. I shall only prescribe such rules as reach a believing person. Therefore thus,

1. If thou be a believer and wouldst be assured, then preserve the sense of thy own natural wretchedness, and of the darkness of thy souls state without assurance. Christ came to Mary when shee was weeping; and the Great God looks down upon the broken Spirit. The highest mountain hath the first sight of the Sun; but the lowest Christian hath the first sight of God. When the people of God were mourning, then saith God, Comfort, comfort ye my people, and say unto them Your sins are pardoned.

You shall find this, That the truly sensible heart hath three properties in it, which invite the Lord much to gratifie it with assurance; viz.

One that is very humble.

Another that is much in the prizing of Gods Love and mercy.

And a third, that it is exceeding thirsty after a good look from God, after some taste of Christ, and God will satisfie all these.

2. Be no strangers to the Ordinances: you shall find this, that the ripening of faith belongs to them as well as the seeds of it.

The word you know is the soul of faith: it was that which did incline the heart to yield, which did make it to accept of Christ, and it is that also which can make us to know our possessions: 1 John 5:13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life. So 1 John 1:4. These things we write unto you that your joy may be full. More plainly: In whom, after you heard the Word of truth, ye believed; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 1:13.

For, look as the Word hath promises which draw the soul to Christ, so it hath promises to clear the soul in its interest in Christ, to

answer all doubts and fears, and to answer the fear about acceptance, so it removes doubts which strive against evidence and propriety.

The Sacrament, you know, it is the Seal of righteousness which is by faith, Rom. 4:11. Look as a Seal doth distinguish, and confirm, and settle the mind, so is the Sacrament ordained to satisfie and perswade the heart of a believer. God appointed this Ordinance, as for other ends, so for this, That the matter might be out of doubt, out of controversie, that Christ is ours, and sin is pardoned in his blood.

3. Be much in prayer: If a man would gain assurance, he must be much in prayers, to perswade and assure the heart: David found marvellous loving-kindness, but then he cried in supplications, Psalm 31:21, 22.

Thou must pray earnestly for mercy, earnestly for pardon, and most earnestly for Christ.

And thou must use diligence. Remember this, that in all thy endeavours for assurance, thou must use diligence; a cold hearing, a cold reading, a cold praying will not bring the soul to it: No, you must be most diligent and fervent in them; and so, &c.

4. Again, with all these there must be joyed strong upright care to please God.

This know that sin separates, but uprightness gathers God and the soul together. To him that ordereth his conversation aright, I will shew the salvation of the Lord, Psalm 50:23.

Why? Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart, Psal. 97:11. See that of the Prophet, Isa. 64:5. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy wayes. Unevenness of heart or way, it is a flaw, and it is that which cuts us off after many prayers, it renews our doubtings again, and we are as far to seek as at the first, but if the heart be plain, if it be sincerely set for God, desirous to please him in all

things, this is a compendious way of assurance: the Word falls in directly to settle and confirm such a soul: The steps of the Word direct us to the sight of our God.

5. Lastly, you must be much in the exercise of faith. There be two parts of it which you must improve. One is, you must against all sense and feeling, and against all the contradictions of reason and unbelief, cast the soul on God in Christ, and rest on him to be your God, and on Christ to be your Lord and Saviour, and that your sins shall be pardoned.

Then you must wait, you must not limit God, but seek still; I will hearken, said David, what God the Lord will speak for he will speak peace to his Saints, Psalm 85:8. See Isa 64:4. Since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him. The Lord will wait that he may be gracious; blessed are they that wait for him, Isa. 30:18. So Isa. 25:9. It shall be said in that day, Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, &c. This is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his salvation. For Psal. 147:11. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

So that this is the sum of all, walk with all uprightness, and with an humble, penitent, and believing soul, cast your sins upon God in Christ, trusting in him alone for the favour of God, pardon of sins, and eternal salvation, and wait upon God for all this in the use of the means, and constant diligency in prayer; you shall at length have your hearts desire; you shall hear from God thus much; I am thy salvation; and from Christ as much: Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.

FINIS.

MONERGISM BOOKS

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